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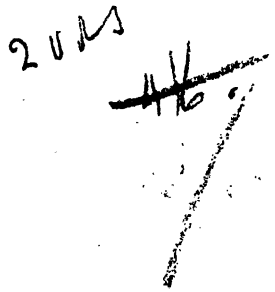

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Minstrel-Love;

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

THE AUTHOR OF UNDINE.

BY GEORGE SOANE, A.B.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:

PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN & R. MARSHALL,
STATIONERS' COURT.

1821.

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29 MAY 1950
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TO

ROBERT R. PENNINGTON, Esq.

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF SINCERE RESPECT

FOR HIS PROFESSIONAL TALENTS

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

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PREFACE

By the Translator.

Baron de la Motte Fouqué, the author of this Work, is already known to the English reader, by his "Undine," perhaps the most beautiful fairy fiction since the days of Spenser. At one time I had hoped that its success would have called forth a general translation of the Baron's works, and, indeed, the commencement of such a task has been attempted with "Sintram," but in so wretched a style both as to elegance and correctness, that the completion of it is neither to be expected nor desired. I know

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not who the translator may be, but a more unfitting person for the task could hardly have been selected. That he is imperfectly acquainted with the German is the least of his disqualifications; he writes in a dialect which is not always English as to single words, and very seldom, indeed, as to idiom; what is still worse, he fancies, nay, actually asserts, that this barbarous jargon is "rather beneficial than otherwise;"—very beneficial, truly! It has always been considered a benefit to any language that it should be written in the idiom of another! The Cambridge mathematician, who exclaimed in the public schools, "*Verte canem ex*,"—turn the dog out,—was also a great benefactor to the Latin language; he added to the stores of Livy and Cicero in a manner

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that may be safely called surprizing. It would, however, puzzle Œdipus to say why the translator should coin new words for his purpose; words can be nothing more than the symbols of ideas, and the language, which was sufficient to the fancy of Shakspeare or the philosphy of Locke, might, one would imagine, be adequate to represent all the ideas that are likely to trouble the translator of "Sintram." He, however, is of a contrary opinion, though he wisely forbears entering into any explanations on the subject, observing that it would lead him into discussions of little interest;—I have not the least doubt of it.

Judging from these decided instances of a perverted taste, I have no hesitation in saying, that he never would have found out the merits of Fouqué if he had not

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been taught to know them by the success of "Undine." The popularity of that little work has evidently been his guide to "Sintram," and, as he could not very well deny so palpable an obligation, he endeavours to lessen it as much as possible, by throwing the work itself into shadow. "Undine," he observes, lies under "the disadvantages of a translation professedly loose;"—and "Sintram," I suppose, has all the advantages of a translation professedly literal; it may, however, be worth while to inquire what those advantages really are, and whether a simple ovation would not have been quite sufficient for his victory.

According to this mode of translation, every word is to find a representative, and even the idiom of the original is to be strictly preserved, however opposite to the genius of the English tongue. In

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pursuance of this exquisite system the translation has the advantage of bearing as close a resemblance to the written language of this country as the Yorkshire dialect does when in its most corrupt form, and on many occasions the reader must be apt to exclaim with Dangle in the critic, "Egad, the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two." There is scarcely a single page that is not loaded with Anglo-german sentences, always disgusting, and not always intelligible even to the proficients in either language; for example:

"The castle-clock after its *many-wheeled* and *slowly-gnarling* screech struck one".—"The Lords and Knights looked at one another *altogether very much astonished.*"—(I am altogether very much astonished at such a trans-

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lation!)—" Biorn said in a somewhat wild and *fiercely-laughing* guise."—" Bear with me and *bring something wiser into the course.*"—" The whole assembly was to the eye like lifeless *somewhat pale* statues." — " Which I forebode many do no good at this *somewhat bewildered* feast."—" At times it seems to me as if that were already a couple of hundred years since, because it is at present thus quite fearfully otherwise." —"He dashed his hands before his face." —" With a powerfully commanding voice."—" He flew out of the chamber, down the steps, and *one heard him without with harsk hideous sounds blow together his followers.*"—" The pride of the *ever-mightier* sea-port towns."—" *A little manikin* with *quite-hideous* features?"—" Our gracious lady lives yet

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even."—"It *might* nevertheless perhaps *once* be that she knew nothing of your dreams."—"His breath-stopping course."—"His *now-altogether-quiet* and exhausted steed."—"*Unwonted-childly cheerfulness*."—"I must now thoroughly look the pilgrim into his wondrous face."—"*A fearfully-over-mighty power*."—"The pilgrim cast over a fearful look at Sir Biorn."—"He bore his costly *entirely-golden* helmet, hanging from his left arm."—"He *was purposed*."—"A solemnly noble reception."—"A *Heaven-reaching* dark edifice."—"Oh, if she would play and sing a little song thereto, that would be all-too-beautiful."—(This translation is all-too-beautiful!)—"Echoing *deeply-powerful* sounds."—"The strings of the harp *still ever* sounded."—"Whither, thou, *cried* Sintram sullenly,

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back ?"—" The *just-upriseu* morn."—"*Strangely helpless* speed."—"An *angelically-beautiful* woman."—"The *joyfully-inspired* Sintram."—" The *deeply-silent* Sintram."—" I wished to see proofs from him; ye, Sirs, then did he engage in prize-fights, such as one cannot at all imagine."—" Neither Lord, nor Knight, nor Yeoman, knew accurately to say how the stranger had in truth looked."—" Sighed *so-right*-heartily and grievously thereto."—" Such a hideous face grinned from beneath, *so quite hellishly distorted to death.*" (Good phrases are surely and ever were very commendable!) " *From thence.*" (This occurs passim).—" I invited him friendly, did I not."—" *Comfort and peace is* promised."—" The gently-opened door."—" The old Sir Biorn was of a now-quite-

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pale colour."—"Now-beginning snow-day."

These are a few only of the advantages belonging to a translation professedly literal, and certainly they deserved a triumph, for it must be confessed that a more complete victory over the English language has never yet been obtained by any one.

To make this matter still more evident, I will now give two passages taken at random, and by no means the worst to be found in Sintram.

"Merrily flew the Norwegian spears from the mighty arms, dashed thunderingly back from the shields swung up to oppose them, at times also met one another clattering in their flight; now and then a warrior in Biorn's or Eirik's array fell silent in his blood.

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"Then broke forth Sir Folko of Montfaucon with his squadron of Norman horsemen. Again while flying by, he sent a greeting up to Gabrielle with his *lightening sword*, and then rushed with a *many-voiced, shouting war-cry into* the left wing of the foe. Eirik's infantry, *pressing* upon their knees, stretched forth their stiff halberds firm as iron against him; many a noble horse reared deadly wounded, and falling backwards threw himself and his rider together upon the ground; many another tore down his foe beneath him at the same time in his death's fall; Folko flew through the midst, unwounded he and his battle-steed, a multitude of chosen horsemen after him. Already confusion raged through the hostile army, already Biorn Flame-eye's bands advanced shouting victory, when a troop of horsemen under Earl

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Eirik threw themselves athwart the great baron, and whilst his Normans, collecting rapidly, drove after him into the new line of foes, the enemy's infantry rolled itself up closer and closer together into a tight thick knot. *One heard*, that this was done in consequence of the strangely yelling cry of a warrior in the middle. And scarcely had this *singular order* of battle been formed, when it flew asunder again *shouting* fearfully in every direction but with a bursting force, as Hecla drives its flames out of its fathomless gulf. Biorn's warriors, who thought of surrounding the foe, tottered and fell and fled before this inconceivable fury. In vain did Sir Biorn place himself against the stream; he himself was already nearly *torn* along in the universal flight."

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"A loud laughter burst against me from without, with the words: 'Hey day! what mighty preparations there are here, in order to show to a single little man the hospitality he requires.' And in truth it passed over me, like a blush of shame, when I saw the little stranger standing over against *me so entirely alone*. I immediately invited him in, and offered him my hand; but he seemed yet too much out of humour, and would no wise give me his. As however we were going up, he became friendlier, and showed me too the golden horn, whereon he had blown; he had yet a second of the same kind, and wore them both screwed on to his helmet."

It must be allowed that this is bad enough; but the poetry is still worse than the prose; take the following instances:

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" Oh! blest are they,
Who cast away
All that this world desires!
God grants to them
A diadem
Among his angel choirs."

A merry Christmas to you, my good masters!

" She prays far hence away
For her dear Sintram's bliss
And hither she would stray,
But has no time for this.
And when thou dost awaken
In every after deed,
Ere thou thy part hast taken,
This lay's good counsel heed:
List to thy mother's voice,
If aye it saith, if no;
Whate'er may tempt thy choice,
Astray thou ne'er wilt go."

This is beyond all sufferance; De la Motte Fouqué is no doubt an indifferent

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poet, but not quite so bad as he appears in this blessed version of Sintram. And these sacrifices are made that the translation may be literal, an object which, after all, is not attained. I shall content myself with one instance in proof of my assertion, but that instance shall be enough to satisfy any one who is not like old Gobbo, high gravel blind.

" Freie Eiritsfechter,
Fangt euch an, mit leuchtenden
Schmucken Waffen zu schmücken zur morgenden Schlacht."

" Free born warriors of Eirik,
Fetch forth your brightest ornaments,
Gird on your gayest arms, for to-morrow's game."

In the original there is not one word of " fetching ornaments," or of " girding on gayest arms." The literal version is :

" Free warriors of Eirik,
Begin to adorn yourselves
With glittering trim arms for to-morrow's battle "

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After this it is rather too much to find the translator boasting in his preface that "there is scarcely even an epithet in the whole volume, to which a corresponding one will not be found in the original German." But his demerits do not rest here; he understands as little of German as he does of English, and seems to be totally unacquainted with its most common idioms.—For instance:

"Folko ließ alſobald das himmelblaue Sammetgezelt, mit goldenen Franzen verziert, das er für die Bequemlichkeit ſeiner zarten Hausfrau mit ſich führte, auf der gelegenſten Stelle der Haide auffchlagen."

"Folko immediately *let* his *satin* tent of heavenly blue, decorated with golden fringe, which he bore with him for the accommodation of his gentle housewife,

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be *struck* in the most convenient spot of the heath."

In these few words are no less than three blunders, though there is not the slightest difficulty in the construction of the sentence; every phrase in it is as simple as it is common. In the first place; *Sammet* is not *satin* but *velvet*, and of the idiomatic use of the verb "*lassen*" the translator is utterly ignorant; *lassen*, when placed before another verb in the infinitive mood, signifies *to cause*, and is equivalent to the French *faire* when placed in similar situations. Nor does *aufschlagen* here signify *to strike*, though that may sometimes be its meaning. To strike a tent, would be to raise it, to take it off the ground, whereas, Folko *pitched* his tent for the

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convenience of the Lady Gabrielle, and the plain meaning of the whole sentence is this;—"Folko carried about with him, for the accomodation of his gentle lady, a sky-blue velvet tent, adorned with golden fringe, which he now caused to be pitched on the most convenient part of the heath."—The partial change in the structure of the sentence is necessary to accommodate it to the genius of the English tongue, for, setting aside the positive blunders of ignorance in the anonymous translation, the whole period is altogether foreign to the nature of our language.

The translator is just as little familiar with the use of the verb *wollen*, as for example;

"Ich bitt' euch, wollet ihm solchen auf eures schönen Hand ertheilen."

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"I pray you, will you bestow it on him with your beautiful hand?" No such thing; the Baron merely says,—"I pray you, be pleased to bestow it on him with your beautiful hand."—It is only a courteous way of expressing a desire.

A still greater degree of ignorance is shown in his translation of the word *Paar;* wherever it occurs, he renders it by the English *pair*, though one would have thought that the merest tyro in German literature would not have fallen into such a blunder; Thus:

"Ein Paar der jüngſten und frohherzigſten begannen einen Rundgeſang."

"A pair of the youngest and most merry-hearted commenced a round-song."

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A pair of fiddle-sticks!—A few of the youngest, &c. — And the *round-song* would be advantageously exchanged for a *roundelay*, which has the merit of being an authorized English word. It is neither more nor less than what the French call Vaudeville, a song in which the two last lines of each couplet are always repeated in chorus by the whole company.

Page 72, he renders, *Thut es immer*, by "*do it, do it*"—This error is of importance only as the translation pretends to be literal. *Immer*, has here the force of entreaty.—*Pray do it*—comes the nearest to the German.

In page 93, *Eisgrau* is translated, *icy-gray*. — Pudet, Pudet! the word means neither more nor less than *hoary*.

In page 104, *Baumgarten, an orchard* is rendered by *garden-trees*.

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Even the Baron's name is as falsely given as his writing; the translator constantly calls him *Fouqué* evidently, believing *de la Motte* to be a christian addition to the surname, though he might just as well have called the French fabulist La Fontaine by the name of Fontaine, a blunder, which by the bye the English are apt to fall into, much to the amusement of their continental neighbours.

But enough has been said to prove my assertion, and, I should imagine that by this time the reader is as weary of the subject as myself. I therefore leave "Sintram" to his fate, being well assured that there is one friendly review at least, which is ready to champion the cause of ignorance by a retort on "Minstrel-Love."—All the better; there will be a time for that too, and I suspect that the manager of the work

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in question, will have no great reason to sing *Te Deum* for his victory.

And here I should willingly conclude this preface, but for my own sake as well as from respect to my readers, it may be as well to say a few words on the motives which have influenced me in this version of "*Sänger-Liebe*" or "Minstrel-love," for it seems that the omission of this in Undine* has given some offence.

* Many have entirely mistaken the object of this beautiful tale. Undine is not, nor does it pretend to be a picture of human life; it is, in truth, an airy insubstantial dream, but then it is a dream of uncommon brilliance; indeed it is hardly possible to read this singular fiction without a sensation of loneliness, a feeling as if shut out from the world with the eyes fixed in intense gaze upon the mocking shapes that roll above us in the clouds. There can be no half opinion about such a work; the reader must

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If by a *literal translation* is meant a translation that renders a given text word for word, it never ought to find place with us, inasmuch as it will often be inelegant, and can seldom give the real meaning of the original. Idiomatic expressions are rarely the same in any two languages,

yield entirely to its impulse or not at all; and what is still better, if it pleases once, it will please a thousand times,—*Decies repetita placebit.* Indeed, such has been its fate; in France as well as in Germany its popularity has been without a rival.

The machinery of this tale is in part borrowed from the Rosicrucians, as exhibited in the comte de Gabalis, and in part from those numerous superstitions which in Germany have peopled all the elements, and every portion of those elements. There is scarcely a rock in the Brockenberg that has not its legend, scarcely a valley without its goblin; and, by a singular contradiction in nature, the most reflective are at the same time the most imaginative people of Europe.

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and every attempt to translate such phrases word for word must produce absurdity; take for instance the common Gallic idiom, *Monsieur, comment se porte-t-il?* the literal version would be—M. how does he carry himself?—and, I presume, such phraseology would find few admirers. If, however, by a vulgar error, literal is to be applied to *ideas* and not to *words*—that is, if *a literal translation* means a translation which faithfully gives every idea of the original—the question then assumes another and a more rational form, and, I think, must mainly depend upon the nature of the author to be translated. Should the original be, as is the case with the works of de la Motte Fouqué, overloaded with useless epithets and tedious repetitions,—should the periods

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he sometimes involved in structure and sometimes trifling in their purpose,—there seems to exist no reason why the translator is to be the faithful copyist of such errors. The Baron is often tediously minute in his descriptions, piling epithet upon epithet, Pelion upon Ossa, till his sentences arise to a most gigantic magnitude. Then, as to repetitions, he has no mercy whatsoever. Every thing with him is golden, and glittering, and shining, and with all my omissions on this score, there is still a greater abundance of such epithets, than is by any means agreeable to my own taste, or want of taste—as the reader may choose to designate it. Then again he is very apt to indite period after period that have no real connexion with each other, though compelled into a sort of union by means

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of the little particles that abound in the German language. Upon all such occasions I have altered without scruple, looking more to the spirit than the phraseology of the original, though sometimes I have even gone beyond this and indulged in licences that must be quite shocking to the admirers of literal translation.

Of the work itself very little need be said; he, who expects to find in it the events and characters of human life, will shut the book in disgust and disappointment; the Baron moves in a world of his own, which is for the most part beautiful and consistent with itself, however opposite to our visible world; his characters are all dreamlike and insubstantial; they act upon a code of feelings pure in the extreme, but not recognized in daily life; war with him is only a bet-

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ter kind of tourney for the display of valour, and honour, and devotion to the cause of beauty. All the grossness of it is kept out of its sight; its filth, its squalid misery, its selfishness of deed and motive, are never for a moment remembered; the Baron always seems to look at life as if he saw it for the first time, and in one of its brightest hours. He views it as an imaginative mind would view a new and beautiful landscape, and it dwells with him like those summer spots that remain to us from the days of boyhood. His pathos is of the deepest and purest kind, and, indeed, upon all occasions there is an intensity, an earnestness, of feeling, that gives reality to his most imaginary creations.

It may perhaps be thought surprising, that with these qualities the Baron should

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be an indifferent poet,—and yet such is the fact; this may, perhaps, arise from his having so little power over language, a deficiency which is too frequently evinced even in his prose. Nothing, indeed, has given me so much trouble in these volumes as the songs and ballads so liberally interspersed: after having translated many of these metrical pieces literally, I have found myself compelled to do my work again, and attempt to supply what I certainly did not find—poetry;—I cannot, however, flatter myself much upon my success.

As a prose writer his sentences want connexion and harmony, and sometimes his expressions are even vulgar. His use of the word *ordentlich* for instance is a glaring vulgarism; but it is useless to pursue this subject, as it cannot be in-

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teresting, and hardly intelligible, to the English reader.

With all these defects the Baron is an extraordinary writer, and the first perusal of his works makes a sort of era in a literary life; there is a moral beauty in them that has seldom, if ever been equalled, never perhaps surpassed. He is the very knight-errant of virtue and religion, and loves them with as much devotion as ever antient warrior loved the mistress for whom he was equally ready to live or die; he describes them too, much after the same fashion, and it is scarcely possible to read his glowing eloquence without some amelioration of the heart and understanding. For my own part, I cannot join with those who condemn such works because they are purely imaginative: I doubt much whether the best virtues of

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the human heart do not arise from feeling, which is a child of fancy; it seems requisite to warm the sterile coldness of worldly sense by the influence of imagination. To say that the virtues exhibited in this work are unattainable, is to say nothing; they still excite a love for virtue by showing it in its most beautiful and captivating colours; even a coward must warm at the tale of chivalrous valour; the scorner of woman must be ameliorated by the tale of chivalrous devotion. There are some, indeed, who fancy themselves wise in proportion as they are dead to fancy; but such philosophists deceive themselves egregiously; it is not that they abound in reason, but that they are entirely void of imagination, and it yet remains to be proved that the absence of fancy is an advantage; its excess may be an evil, so is

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the excess of blood; but a deficiency of either is just as pernicious as the superabundance.

It has sometimes been objected to works of this kind that they are not natural, for "*Nature*" is the cant of modern criticism,—the *ignis fatuus*, which leads the sciolist through many a weary chase, only at last to leave him in a quagmire. Neither poetry nor painting afford correct likenesses of nature; a mere image of wax will give a closer resemblance to the human face than the finest portrait, and *George Barnwell* approaches more nearly to common life than the *Lear* of Shakspeare. Men do not usually speak in blank verse, nor are their ideas of daily life poetical; the homespun language and thoughts of *George Barnwell* are for the most part such as are afforded

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by the usual habits of society, but none, I presume, would advocate the superiority of Lillo over Shakspeare.

Independantly of this, nature, in regard to human sense, is perpetually changing; and so long, therefore, as a work is in unison with itself, we have no right to complain if it should not harmonize with our ideas of things without. The truth of one age is not the truth of another. While man believed in witchcraft, the belief was natural; the poet who faithfully described that belief did by no means sin against reality. How too, can we be sure that our system may not perish as the system which it has superseded? Fact, or what *is*, can admit of no change; but truth, or what man *believes*, is as mutable as the clouds of summer. Even those works which most pretend to image the

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manners of life are false by exaggeration of all kinds; by exaggeration of beauty no less than of deformity; and, what they gain in nature, they lose in harmony. Besides, if we refuse our admiration to works of this class only because they are improbable, how is it that we put our faith in Homer or in Dante? The mind that starts with contempt from a fairy tale simply because it is improbable, ought in reason to revolt at the Gods and Goddesses of the Iliad; the truth, in either case, is much about the same, and he who is not disgusted with the councils of Olympus and the wars of Venus, has no right to quarrel with the Gnomes of the mine or the Nixies of the fountain. The latter, indeed, are more essentially poetic than the Heathen Deities, though they have not been fortunate enough to find a

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Homer to clothe them with immortality.

——Illachrymabiles
Urguentur ignotique longâ
Nocte carent quia vate sacro.

The fact is, that there is an ideal beauty inseparable from our notion of works of art, whether of poetry, painting, or romance. *Falstaff* is admired, not as the representative of life,—for when did so brilliant a being exist?—but for the excellence that he has over and above the highest excellence with which we are acquainted; the humour, which even Shakspeare could not have supplied without much study, appears to cost *Falstaff* nothing; it is a part of his very essence, and in one hour he exhibits the wit and intellect that must have been the product of many weeks. In short, we

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admire the mind of the author as shewn through the medium of his images, rather than the prototype of any human being. It is the presence of this ideal beauty in so high a degree that makes Shakspeare immortal, while Ben Jonson, who only imitated life, is rapidly sinking into oblivion, or at best only rests on the shelves of the curious or the learned.

It may perhaps, be said, that this argument would, if pushed a little farther, defend any creation of the fancy, however monstrous; if it applies to *Caliban* and *Puck*, why not apply to the *Fairy Tales of the Countess d'Anois*, or *Mother Bunch?* The fact is, it does apply to one as well as to the other; the less or greater resemblance to nature has nothing to do in either case: it is the self-consistency, the harmony, the innate and

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independent qualities, that excite our admiration of these visionary creations; the fairy-tales are contemptible from their contradictions, from the puerility of their fancy. Or will any one venture to say that he admires *Caliban* and *Ariel* as portraits of human existence?

The defects and excellencies of the Baron de la Motte Fouqué, depend altogether upon this principle. His imagination is ever rich, and often beautiful, but still his fictions are far from being always consistent, and sometimes they are puerile. Even fiction has its truth, as well as real life; we can allow that a fairy may dwell in a cowslip-bell, but when the Baron gives a substance to the intangible tones of music, converting them into whetstones for warriors and * hobby-

* This is softened down in the translation.

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horses for children,—the wildest fancy must revolt from so childish a conception. It seems to be a necessary rule in all works of fancy that their visionary beings should be united to the world of life by the link of our prejudices,—that they should not be in direct opposition to our common thoughts and habits,—that they should have a *vraisemblance*, and not be exaggerated merely for the sake of exaggeration. It is in this respect that popular legends have so decided a superiority over the fictions of modern genius. In the latter there is nothing real to the imagination; they form the belief of no age; they come before us as the mere day-dreams of the imagination,—beautiful it is true,—but still no more than dreams. Popular legends, on the contrary, though for the most part infinitely more improbable, yet were

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the truth of one period, and we feel that they were so; we feel that they were the accepted faith of a superstitious age, and, though miserably perverted, yet after all, had their origin in reality. They are, in fact, a portion of the history of other times, and bring us more closely in contact with the thoughts and feelings of our fore-fathers; they may be called the poetry of common life, for they have in them every thing of poetry but the rhyme, though that poetry must be allowed to be of an inferior order. While I am upon this subject, I trust the reader will forgive me if I attempt to illustrate my argument by a beautiful popular legend from the works of Arndt: The necessity of telling the tale in few words compels me to use my own language, though I should have infinitely preferred a translation of the original.

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The Nine Mountains at Rambin.

"The Nine Mountains at Rambin are inhabited by dwarfs, who dance, and sing, and sport in the moonlight, and more particularly when the earth is visited by spring or summer. These dwarfs are rather mischievous than malicious; they are fond of alluring children into their power, who then are compelled to serve them in their subterraneous abodes; but this service is not hard, and at the end of fifty years, by a law of the dwarf kingdom, they are again set at liberty; nor do these fifty years add an hour to the age of the captives; time and the sun have no influence upon these realms of the middle earth; and it is farther said, that such people have ever after been fortunate in the world, either from the wisdom they learnt below, or from the assistance of

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their masters, who have wished to recompense their servitude.

" The unearthly beings, who dwell in the Nine Mountains, belong to the class of Brown Dwarfs, and they are not malicious; but in two other mountains are White Dwarfs, and they are the friends of all in the upper world. There are also Black Dwarfs, who work the metals with an ingenuity far surpassing that of man; but their hearts are evil, and they are never to be trusted.

" I will now tell a story of these Brown Dwarfs in the Nine Mountains, which happened long ago; I had it, in my childhood, from Henry Fierk, who was a peasant at Giesendorf, and who was well acquainted with all such matters. You must therefore suppose that it is Henry who tells this story;

" There once lived at Rambin a peasant, named Jacob Dietrich, with his wife and family. Of all his children, he

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most loved, the youngest, who was then in his eighth year, and tended cows in the meadow by the Nine Mountains: here the little Hans got acquainted with a cowherd called Klas Starkwolt, a grey-headed man, whose brain was like a volume of ancient fairy tales. But if the old peasant was fond of repeating his legends, the boy was no less fond of listening to them, till at last his young fancy was so inflamed, that he could neither speak nor think of ought but Dwarfs and Gnomes, and golden cups, and crowns of diamonds. Above all, he wished to get a Dwarf-cap, for Klas had told him, that whoever was so fortunate as to find or gain one, might safely descend into the mountain, and would have all the Dwarfs at his command. At last he resolved to try, and one night stole away from home, and laid himself on the top of the highest mountain, though his heart beat all the time like a hammer, and his breathing was as the wind of autumn.

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"And now the clock struck twelve! On a sudden he heard a murmuring, and a whistling, and a rustling, and the song of voices, and the tramp of little feet in the dance, though as yet nothing was visible to his sight but the flowers and the leaves, that were stilly sleeping in the moonshine.

"At last a cap fell close before his feet; in an instant he seized it, and in the pride of his heart set it upon his head, when—O wonder! the little dancers were at once visible. The Dwarf would fain have got back his cap by flattery, but Hans was inexorable, and showed his knowledge of his newly-acquired power, by ordering the little brownie to provide a supper. The Dwarf was forced to obey, for his power had gone from him with his cap of invisibility.

"The cock now crowed for the third time, and the young light streaked the east, when 'Away! away! sounded from the bushes, and the stalks, and the flow-

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ers,—and the mountain opened, and all sank below in a silver cistern.

" Hans was astonished in his descent at the magic glitter of the walls; they were as if inlaid with pearls and diamonds, such was their exceeding brilliance; while beneath, in the distance, he heard the sweetest music, that stole upon his senses like May-odours, and at length wrapped him in a gentle slumber. What time had passed he knew not, but when he awoke, his little brownie was by his side, ready to do him service; and he found himself in a chamber that was brilliant beyond the splendour of the earth. The tables were of spotless marble; the walls, of emerald; and the frames of the mirrors were covered with diamonds. No sun shone in this subterranean kingdom, but the precious stones shed around a perpetual light, that was fairer and clearer than the fairest and clearest night of earth. They were the stars and the moons of this country, but

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their splendour was borrowed from no sun, and eclipsed by no clouds.

"It was mid-day when a bell rang, and the Brownie said, 'Master, will you dine alone, or in the great assembly?'—'In the great assembly,' replied Hans, whither he was on the instant conducted by his servant. Here he saw an infinite crowd of little men and women already collected, while others poured into the hall from every side; in many places the ground opened, and tables arose, covered with the most costly vessels, and the most delicious meats, and wine that sparkled in the goblets like water beneath the sun-beams. The chiefs of the little people invited Hans to their table, and placed him between their fairest maidens. The feast began, and soon the mirth waxed loud, for the Dwarfs are a lively race, whose spirits are light and sparkling as the wine that bubbles in their glasses. Birds of the richest plumage were ever on the wing above them, pour-

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ing forth their songs in harmony with a strange music that floated through the air, so soft, so sweet, so wild, that it drew from its throne the anxious and delighted soul, to leave it quivering on the lips.

" Crowds of servants waited around the tables. Some bore about the golden cups and the chrystal fruit-baskets; some strewed the ground with flowers, that must have grown in gardens near the sun, such was their exceeding beauty,—beauty that was even undimmed by the lustre of the diamond; others scattered about odours so sweet, that the senses ached with pleasure. These servants were the children of men who had fallen into the power of the Dwarfs. At first Hans was inclined to pity their estate, but when he observed their rich clothes, and their rosy cheeks, and the springiness of their steps, he thought to himself, ' after all, they are not so badly off as I was in running after cows and oxen; and,

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moreover, a time will come when they may be free again.' And he thought no more of them, but sported with his little companions, happier than any earthly king upon his throne.

"They had sate thus for two hours, when the principal rang a little bell; in a trice sank the seats and the tables, and the company was again upon the foot. He rang a second time; and, where the tables had been, there arose orange-trees and palms and myrtles, rich with fruit and blossom, and upon the branches sang the sweetest birds; but though their numbers were many as the sands of the desert, yet all their voices united in a perfect harmony. Hans, however, soon found out the cause; in a niche within the roof sate an aged man, who gave the note to which they were compelled to sing. He was silent as hoary time, and spoke no mortal word, while the rest were often wont to talk too much.

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"The old man above now sounded to the dance, and the birds all echoed back the minstrel's tune. In an instant the whirl began, and the little maidens, that had sate by Hans, caught him by the arms, and sprang about with him in the dance for two hours long, and yet neither his breath was short nor his feet weary. The more they danced, the wilder rose their spirits, till every soul was bathed in ecstacy. Often in the time of his old age was Hans accustomed to say, when he described this scene, 'there may be, and no doubt are, greater joys in heaven, but earthly imagination is too weak to picture them.'

"Thus passed the first week; in the second, Hans began to walk, attended by his servant, through those meads and fields which seemed to have no end. From this may be easily imagined the vast depth below, for the outside summit of the mountain was nothing more than a little peak, clothed with shrubs

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and bushes. The trees, that bloomed thickly in these verdant meadows, were loaded with fruit, while milk and wine were ever flowing from the rocks. It blew, and the cheek felt no wind; it was light, and the cheek felt no sun: the waves rolled, and there was no danger: one perpetual spring was upon the grass and upon the tree, and the leaves had never been touched by the heats of summer, the yellowness of autumn, or the frosts of winter.

"Hans had lived thus many months, when at last he resolved to visit the schools and become a student with the servants, for the Dwarfs make a rule of instructing all the children of earth who fall into their power, as far as they may be capable of receiving their lessons. But the little people have apprehensions infinitely more subtle than the mind of any human being, and are well acquainted with all the mysteries of nature. They are besides exceedingly industrious, and

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work the metals with a minuteness that can be only equalled by the texture of the blossom or the flower.

"Amongst all his companions in the school, the one he best loved was a little fair-complexioned maiden, called Eliza, who came from his own village, and was the pastor's daughter. With her he passed his childhood in brotherly affection, without any thought of the earth or its inhabitants, till at length he had reached his eighteenth, and she her sixteenth, year, when this affection ripened into love. The Dwarfs saw this with pleasure, for their great desire is to rule, and they hoped to enslave him by means of his passion for Elizabeth; but in this they were mistaken; he had learnt from his attendant, that he who was master of one Dwarf was master of them all and could command the utmost exertions of their power.

"The affection of the lovers increased with the lapse of time, and every even-

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ing was spent in lonely twilight walks; for in the hours that darkness was upon earth, the lustre of the diamond would wax dim here below; an artificial night then succeeded, not dark indeed, but pale as the evening-glimmer in the aisles of some antiquated abbey. On such occasions, Hans was ever pleased and cheerful, but Elizabeth would often think of the life above, where men dwell beneath the changing orbs of heaven. Still, however, this was but a passing shadow of the moment; in listening to him she loved, all else was speedily forgotten.

"It once happened that they walked farther than was their custom, till they at last found themselves beneath the very spot where the mountain opened to let out the Dwarfs into the upper world. On a sudden they heard the crowing of many cocks from the earth above, a sound that had not reached them for twelve long years; with it

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awoke in Elizabeth's breast a thousand recollections of the earth,—of her home, and her dear parents, and the playmates of her childhood,—of the flowers of spring and the winter's fireside. Her heart was full; she fell upon the bosom of her lover, wetting his cheek with her tears, while for a time the words died away upon her lips. At length her passion found language for its expression. 'It is beautiful here below, and the little race are kind and gentle, but yet my heart is not at home with them, and never can be. This is not a life for human beings: every night I dream of my parents, and of the church, and of the Sunday crowds waiting around my father; and then—oh then my heart throbs to be with them, and join in Christian prayer to God and the host of Heaven. Here, too, we can never be man and wife, for here is no priest to marry us, and we must grow old and grey in singleness. Think of this,

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and contrive some means for our departure.'

"And Hans answered his betrothed,—'You advise me rightly, dear Elizabeth. It was to me also as if I heard in that cry the voice of Christ calling out in love,—*Ascend, my children, from the abodes of sorcery and blindness! ascend to the world of the sun, and walk in day like the other children of the earth.* Yes, Elizabeth, for the first time my heart is heavy. I will not stay here a day longer, for they dare not keep me: I am their master.' At these last words Elizabeth became pale as death; they reminded her of what she had too lightly forgotten,—of her servitude, and its necessary duration for fifty years before she could revisit earth. 'Alas,' she said, 'this is well for you who have a power above that of the Dwarfs; but a cruel law holds me to this place for fifty years. What have I to do on earth, when my father and

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mother are dead, and the play-fellows of my youth are old and grey? Age will be upon your head also, and what then will it avail me that I am young, and only in my twentieth year?—Poor, poor Elizabeth!'

"Hans felt the truth of what she had spoken; but he pressed her hand to his heart, and promised never to leave that place of middle earth, until he could leave it with his Elizabeth. With this they parted, sad and almost hopeless.

"The whole night through, Hans meditated upon the way of freeing his beloved: when morning broke, he summoned to him the six chief Dwarfs, with whom he always sate at dinner. Much as they were astonished at this call, they were forced to obey it, and, when all were present, he demanded of them his Elizabeth. This was at once refused; upon which Hans, in great wrath, exclaimed, 'You can and shall give up Elizabeth. You know my

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orders; I entreat no more; let me see you again with the morrow.'

"And the morrow came, but with it came no alteration in the resolves of the little people. Hans therefore began to show his power, by employing them in breaking and dragging huge stones, and in other hard work, that martyred their tender limbs as if they had been stretched upon the rack. Still all was in vain.—He made them mangle each other with iron scourges, till the blood poured down in torrents—but he got no nearer to his object. At last he could no longer bear the sight of their torments, and, ceasing to plague them, he separated himself from their society, and lived almost as a hermit.

"In one of his lonely walks, he was breaking the stones against each other for want of occupation, when suddenly a toad sprang from a piece of rock that he had just shivered. At this sight the tales of the old cow-herd flashed upon

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his memory, and he exclaimed,—'Now, then, Elizabeth is mine: the malicious Dwarfs could endure the scourge, but here is an enemy, whose sight will sting them worse than the sting of iron, or the bite of scorpions:'—with this he enclosed the creature in a vase of silver, and again summoned the little people to his presence.

"No sooner had they come within a few paces of their noxious enemy, than its influence acted upon them like an electric shock. They fell to the earth convulsed, shivering, shrieking, and writhing like half-bruised serpents. Every hand was stretched forth to pray for mercy, and every voice was loud in promises. Hans, feeling that the power was now with himself, told them he should depart that night, between the hours of eleven and twelve, with his Elizabeth, and ordered them to load five waggons with the riches of their kingdom—their books, their gold, their

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emeralds, and their diamonds. To this they promised assent, and even to his wish, that all their servants should be free, who, according to earthly reckoning, were more than twenty years of age.

"It was an hour after midnight; the mountain opened, and they stood again upon the earth, and for the first time for twelve long years they saw the red of morning glimmering in the east. The Dwarfs swarmed like bees about the waggons; all were busy, though in silence, for the hand of their master lay heavy on them; it looked like the breaking up of their kingdom. And now Hans took the brown cap from his head, waved it thrice in air, and flung it amongst the crowd. In an instant all had vanished; nothing was to he seen but a few bushes;—nothing to be heard but the whispers of the grass that waved in the morning wind like the gentle rise of ocean when it swells but no

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wave breaks its surface. The clock from Rambin church struck two. All fell down upon their knees, and gave praises unto Heaven.

" Great was the surprise of the whole village, when this singular cavalcade appeared before the cottage of Jacob Dietrich; but wonder was soon lost in joy when the tale was told; the old man and the pastor blessed their children, and at their wedding danced forty maidens in their shoes of glass, a thing unheard of since the marriage of Hans Dietrich with the fair Elizabeth."

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Introduction.

IN the pleasant coast-country, which is called Provence, there arose upon a gentle declivity, many centuries since, a heap of ruins, which was visible far out upon the sea, and announced to the wanderer's eye the original splendour of the then-decaying castle, Maraviglia: some traces of them may, perhaps, remain even in the present day, but then the ruins seemed scarce deserted; upon the hearth still lay the half-burnt brands, with which the last time the hospitable banquet should have been prepared; and if the passing clouds, so high and so distant, had not looked through the broken roof, one might have

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been inclined to ask, "Where are the steward, and the cellarer, and the castle-lord himself?"

One beautiful spring evening, three very different characters were standing on the open door-way;—a hoary, thoughtful warrior, in antique armour; a youth, bright and lovely as the morning, the sword upon his thigh and the lyre upon his arm; and, lastly, a monk of lofty, robust stature, in the best years of manhood, a prophetic anger in his eye-brows, a saintly smile upon his lips.

All three gazed for a long time in silence upon the ruins.

At length the old warrior addressed the youth with a melancholy smile;

"If it is so, and so must be, my dearest foster-son, that you are to wander through the world, a minstrel and a poet,—why, very good. The finger of heaven almost always points out for that, which we love best in this world, a very different path from what ourselves would

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have imagined. I only wished that you would once more see with your own eyes the ruined halls of your great ancestors, hoping that God, perhaps, might turn your heart at this exalted spectacle; but now it seems to me, that he has not moved you."

"I too, think not, my dear foster-father," replied the young Arnald, and sweetly touching the strings of his lyre, he sang this song:

"From the hollow of the hills,
From the moss and from the rills,
What a murmur strikes the ear!
Now it flies, and now is near!
The music of that strain
Is thrilling through each vein;
With the motion of a swan,
The sound comes floating on;
'Tis of us thy song shall be,
From the ocean to the sea,
Oh, thou gallant Troubadour,
And thy song shall aye endure.
Why swells and beats thy breast,
By poesy possess'd,
Unless thy fathers' glory
And the darkness of their story

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To all the world be spoken,
To the heart in pity open,
To the eye that still appears
The loveliest when in tears?
Up! gird thyself! aspire
With the sword and with the lyre;
The wide world is before thee,
Thy fathers hover o'er thee.'"

"One must, however, needs listen to him with delight," said the old Sir Walter, and he seated himself on a buttress of the ruined wall. The monk gazed like an eagle, stilly and steadfastly, on the setting sun.

Arnald after a pause resumed; "My best friends, you would never yet tell me the nature of the dreadful evil that fell upon my ancestors, and shattered their castle and their earthly happiness together. Now then, do so, unless your duty and honour forbid it. In letting me chuse my future way of life you have declared me past my nonage; I think then, you would do well, and therefore, wisely, if you spoke without reserve to

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that I ask; besides, you know I am not stubborn; the same feeling, which now drives me from you, may, when better understood, retain me with you for half a century."

Sir Walter looked doubtfully, and almost imploringly, at the monk, and sighed with deep emotion; "What think you, Altarbol? is the right hour come? and may we hope henceforth all to have one and the same wish?"

"Nor now, nor ever," replied Altarbol, with melancholy earnestness. "Here below, dear Sir Walter, here below, nothing can come of those human hopes that struggle after the blessed and perfect joys of paradise. But the noble youth has solemnly requested the history of his race, and I deem it fitting we should deliver to him this fragment of his inheritance. Listen, therefore, Arnald, my youthful Minstrel; it is a matter of serious import."

Arnald sate down upon the door-sill of

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his paternal ruins, and the nervous Prior, Altarbol, still gazing steadfastly upon the evening sun, and leaning against a mighty olive-tree, spoke thus:

"The Church is a loving, and, for that very reason, a severe mother. As long as it may consist with the eternal weal of her children, she properly and indulgently allows them to sport without restraint; but when they take to naked steel, and begin to hack at each others' hearts and heads, under the mad idea that so truth, and freedom, and certainty are to be found, she then draws back the mantle of love, with which at first she veiled their folly. Severely judging, she sends her looks and voice through the tumultuous crowd, and if that avail not,—then, alas! my son, with bleeding heart she recurs to the bloodysword."

"Has a mother *that* for her children?" asked Arnald, and his cheeks glowed high with suppressed anger.

"Oh, thou daring, stubborn spirit of

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the Maraviglias," sighed Altarbol, with a melancholy smile, "how dost thou show thyself, even in this tender stripling!—Recollect, my son, the Church is no temporal, but an eternal mother, and it is better we lose the body than the soul."

"True," replied Arnald, and humbly inclined his head. "It only seems to me as if the Church's sword had often fallen upon the dearest and noblest of her children: for he who honestly seeks truth, even though it should be in too bold a path, yet seeks, and most certainly shall find, our heavenly Father."

"Amen!" said the Prior solemnly; and, folding his hands, he remained a long time silent. The sun, just about to set, streamed upon him like a glory.

"My young Maraviglia," he continued after a pause, "all is as you have said; and heretofore when the sword of the church smote one of her noblest and

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dearest sons,—he was called Arnold of Brescia.—"

"Arnold of Brescia!—Arnald of Maraviglia!" exclaimed the astonished youth, interrupting him; "Arnold! Arnald! both sound so like! What think you, my exalted friend, is there not a secret relation between him and me? The bare name thrills to my very heart."

And now burst forth the prophetic anger, that lay on Altarbol's brow, like to a threatening tempest, and sent forth such burning flashes from his eyes, that the young Minstrel shrunk together and drooped his head.

"None," said the Monk slowly, but with the stern earnestness of a judge, "none beyond their limits. Remain you, Arnald, and trouble not yourself about the deep doctrines of the exalted Arnold. With your songs you may, as I would fain hope, rejoice both God and man; in the abysses of the fearful

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search, the light and the steps would at once fail you, and you would tumble down in giddiness, never again to rise, or at best would serve as a dreadful warning to others like yourself."

Arnald covered his head and almost trembled, which Altarbol perceiving thus went on with smiling lips and a voice of indescribable sweetness; "Thou art a noble gardener, my boy, and must by no means become a worker in the mine."

Arnald looked up affectionately, and the Prior seating himself close by the youth's side, at the foot of the olive-tree, continued:

"Thy great grandsire, my noble Maraviglia, would also be a delver in the mine. He joined the new doctrines, so daring, so long endured; nay, for a time, he even lived under the shelter of his castle, that now lies in ruins; but at length it went so far that the children of the church took to naked steel,

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and with their too subtle efforts maimed head and breast for time and for eternity. Alas! youth, the church was compelled to let fall the mantle of love; and, after many a warning, always echoed in vain, her avenging sword smote the castle of thy ancestors like the lightning and the thunder."

All for a time were silent. At length the Minstrel asked; "What became of Arnold of Brescia?"

Sir Walter gazed upon him, askant, in anger and said, "You ask not what became of your great grandsire?"

"My grandsire," replied the Troubadour, with an imperious manner that sometimes came over the otherwise gentle youth,—"My grand-sire would certainly have asked after Arnold before asking of himself, and I will do the same; what became of Arnold of Brescia?"

"It is now," replied Altarbol in a solemn voice, "it is now exactly fifty years since that high and gifted soul

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burst from the flames of an earthly pyre to rise, as I hope, quite purified, above, and absolved from the flames beyond the grave."

Arnald sank upon his knee, and prayed with fervour; by his side the monk.—When they again rose, Altarbol said; "I trust our prayer has breathed peace unto his soul."

"To his, and perhaps to others," replied the Minstrel; "for I at the same time have prayed for those who gave him to the flames. Altarbol, my exalted master, that was, and ever will be, a rash deed. He only, who is above, can look into the hearts of men and decide upon their purification in the flames of this or of the other world."

And this time the Monk's prophetic anger was still beneath the ashes; he embraced the youth; "You have done well in that prayer, but here my tale is at an end; what else has happened to your ancestors, let it be told you by Sir Walter."

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And Sir Walter of Vergi stood up loftily, and drew his sword, and, striking the ground-sill of the door, exclaimed: "Arise from your graves, ye antient heroes of Maraviglia; breathe the fire of your spirit into your descendant's heart, that he may worthily receive the story of his race!"

"I am ready for it," said Arnald, and stood erect in knightly daring, while the heaven of stars looked down upon him in its richest splendour.

The hoary knight began.—"Countless, my noble youth, as the stars in yonder heaven, are the heroes of thy race. Obscure tradition alone tells of its early origin, but we know that you spring from those who have glittered on the throne of dukes and kings. Till to-day it was enough for you to understand yourself of noble blood and born to arms; now that it imports the destination of a life, every veil shall fall away before you. Know, then, the wondrous Minstrel-king,

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of whose unfortunate, yet brilliant life, you have ever loved to hear, is in the number of your ancestors."

"Ah now, my foster-father," said Arnald smiling in quiet ecstacy,—"Ah now I see full well why the lyre has grown so to my heart."

Sir Walter looked down sadly, nay almost confusedly, and Altarbol gently murmured; "Thus is it with the words of man; how often does he spur when he thinks to stay and guide; Oh, thou eternal glory, that, felt or unfelt, makest us all thy messengers and servants!"

After a pause Sir Walter recommenced. "Thy grandsire had less in common with the Minstrel-king than with others of thy ancestors who in bloody battles fought and died. Often in those dark and stormy times did they proffer to him forgiveness, oblivion of the past, and I know not how many fine things more, if he would only comply with this or that ceremony to reconcile himself with

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state and church. Then would he calmly lean on his huge sword, and answer thus.—'How you will begin with me, rests with man; how it will end, rests with God; whether I am to be a scoundrel or a hero, that is with myself.'—And it came to this at last, that no one would venture to him any more with such proposals. But he armed himself in his castle stilly, and cheerily, and piously, prepared, if need should be, to repel force by force.

"And there *was* need,—and in many triumphant battles, he beat the enemy from his lands and far beyond their boundaries. At length an overwhelming superiority marched against him, and he then dismissed almost all his warriors, retaining only those few, whom he knew to be nearly as high-minded as himself. In a desperate sally he almost routed the number of his adversaries, and was at last rather overwhelmed than beaten. He lay under his dead horse,

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and the leader of the enemy even then offered him favourable conditions, but your great grandsire exclaimed, "Heaven forbid that a hair on the head of a Maraviglia should be yielded for atonement when the cause was honest resistance against unjust power!—And they let fly their shafts at him,—and he was dead. Around him, in death as glorious, lay his little troop of heroes."

"They all went to God," said Arnald; "May our Saviour one day grant me as fair an end!"

"Brave son of my heart!" cried the old Sir Walter, and embraced the youth. "Now then you certainly follow in the heroic path of your great grandsire, but as a true son of the Church, and the fame of arms is your first object."

"My first object on earth is the golden lyre," replied Arnald, with gentle firmness. "I am and shall remain the not-unworthy descendant of the great Minstrel-king;—be not, therefore, angry with me, dearest foster-father."

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"Angry?" replied Sir Walter; "no, the talk is not of that, nor between us can it ever be."—But his gentle, friendly eyes were turned to earth almost in sorrow; he returned the half-drawn sword, slowly and without a sound, into the scabbard.

"Patience, Sir Walter," said Altarbol. "Have you not had patience on many a hot day of battle, when the enemy long waved here and there, without falling into the position that promised you a certain victory? Still, you waited, till at length it fell out to your wishes, and the glorious garland twined about your brows."

"Oh, that you should now remind me of it," sighed the old warrior; Battle, victory, and garland! Do you remember when you read to this stripling your celebrated Roman poet, Horace, and the child at first was enamoured of the language and the rhymes?"

"Of the measure," said Altarbol, correcting him; "There are no rhymes in those antient languages."

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"Be it what it may," interrupted Walter, indignantly, "the boy no longer took pleasure in it, when an ode of Horace confessed, that the so-celebrated poet had once flung away his shield in battle. "Oh, God!" cried then my brave pupil, "how could I so long have intercourse with a runaway? I, an honourable son of knighthood? and he was not again to be brought to Horace. But now, Altarbol,—my grey hairs stand on end as at a spectre,—now has my darling foster-son forgotten all that, and will himself be such a Horace."

"And who has told you so?" exclaimed Arnald, indignantly rising from the sill of the ruins, on which, during this conversation, he had rested; "Who has told you so? and who empowers you to speak such slanders?"—but soon, as if awaking from a horrid dream, the youth recollected himself, and said; "Your pardon; I forgot that I was speaking to my foster-father."

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"You have got a strange ascendancy over me within these few hours," murmured Walter, and remained awhile silent. Soon, however, resuming his wonted superiority, he said; "Boy, if thou art strong and lofty as thy fathers, what art thou doing on their humble door-sill? What art thou seeking there in the dust?"

"Aye, but holy dust, where once sounded the minstrel steps of Maraviglia. I have whetted my sword on the ground-sill of my forefathers."

"That sword, which in the very same moment you renounce," exclaimed the knight, half in anger, half in joy.

"Shame to the minstrel who renounces the sword!" retorted Arnald with enthusiasm. "If the Roman Horace lost his shield, I will hold mine aloft in many a bloody fight, and friendly squadrons shall collect around Maraviglia's standard, while the troops of enemies shall fly from it in terror. Oh, that I were

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not an orphan; that my dear parents could live to see the glory and the honour yet before me!"

"God bless thee, my young friend," said Altarbol, "and keep thee in humility thy whole life long; for many a splendid hour awaits thee."

"I myself believe not that, dear father."

"And art, perhaps, the last of thy race!" cried Sir Walter, "and thy sire and thy grandsire have often wandered hither, consoling themselves in their still obscurity with the hope that a Maraviglia would one day come, who again would raise this castle to unrivalled splendour. Yes, my Arnald, when thy dying father gave thee to my charge, the words of prophesy streamed from his lips; in the moment of his passing into the last slumber a brilliant palace stood before his fancy, built up by thee, and through it the name of Maraviglia was renowned and glorious to all posterity."

"He may have meant it otherwise.

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Believe me, it is not with prophecy as with the words that man utters from his own will in his daily occupations: and yet how often do they also turn to predictions,—to mirrors in which is typed futurity, a thousand-fold misinterpreted, and yet at last confirming and explaining the mysterious riddle, sometimes fearfully, sometimes delightfully, that all cry out in wonder, 'Ah! was it that?'—The splendid palace, which I was to build, which was to glorify my name,—but the bodement is enough; I will not become an interpreter of dreams."

He gazed long in silence upon the heavens, and when Altarbol asked what it was above that so rivetted his sight, he pointed out to him a beautiful constellation, saying,—"Chiefly this; it has always been above my head in the evenings of Autumn, when I looked out on the dark mysterious heavens, and has seemed to me like an assisting friend."

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"It is called the Wain."

"The wain—the wain of Heaven," repeated Arnald thoughtfully. "Oh ye golden wheels, whose clear music does indeed sound, but not to us, roll for ever high above me, and admonish me to deeds of piety and glory; your eternal disposer is also mine—And see, my reverend friend, that other constellation, yonder:"—he pointed it out to him more closely—"that has always filled me with melancholy emotion, as if it was to cost me many tears, and yet be my best, my purest happiness on earth."

Altarbol would have spoken its name, but Arnald interrupted him: "Name it not, my exalted master; it is to me as if the whole world must hear it at the same time, and misunderstand me after, when I find the meaning of my star and celebrate it in song. The name, which it is to bear in my heart, I shall learn at the fitting time."

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Altarbol was silent, and the Minstrel warmly embraced his foster-father;—"The separation from you, now its hour approaches, lies heavier on my heart than I thought it would have done. My inward self begins to bleed; but on that very account let us part, even on the instant. God bless you, and repay you the much, much love, you have ever shown to me. Ah, my dear lord and father!"—

"You must not weep, young nobleman," said Walter, while down his own cheeks rolled two bright drops, that glittered in the star-light. Altarbol laid his hand in blessing on the Minstrel's head; they parted without a word. Arnald quickly disappeared in the near wood, and his two companions, having once again looked after him, dived into the darkness of the opposite valley. Lighted by the moon, that just then arose, stood the ruins of castle Maraviglia, solitary and silent.

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Minstrel-Love.

CHAPTER I.

The noble stripling, whom we left, at the end of the introduction, in the first blush of youth, at the entrance of a world that to him was new and almost unknown, we now meet again at the beginning of this history as a tried warrior and a celebrated minstrel.

What happened to him in the interval is but imperfectly told by the legends that guide our steps. Thus much in general may be gathered from it, that Arnald of Maraviglia's youth was not deficient in adventures, that he honourably drew his sword in many an early

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battle, and that the storm of voluptuous passion, and the tenderness of pure love, alike passed over him in all their various accents, now shaking his heart tumultuously, and now softening it to sweet forebodings. Still he felt as if he were serving idols instead of gods, and a deep veil of melancholy spread over his wounded soul.

He would have wished to bury himself in a calm, poetic solitude, as the only thing from which he could expect the healing of his wounded mind; he is said, indeed, with that view to have travelled through many vallies of the then-lovely France, and to have at last fancied that he had found the object of his seeking; when suddenly came tidings to his ear which made his true heart repress every wish of poetic retirement, as an unknightly dream of idleness;—his native land, the beautiful Provence was in danger.

In the Arabic states on the southern

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coasts of Spain,—these were then called Moorish, to mark their paganism, however fair their women, however sun-brown their warriors,—in these states was a young prince, who, in honour of a lady, had vainly undertaken to conquer Provence and pervert it to the faith of Mahomet. The Frank lands were occupied with their own commotions; no aid was thence to be expected; it seemed, indeed, as if the adventurous prince must succeed in his undertaking, for which, it was known, he had prepared with many swelling sails, and many youthful, but approved warriors.

It was Spring, when Arnald, upon a gold-bright charger, bought with careful choice for the journey, passed towards the West, and over the border-hills into his lovely native land. A shirt of mail, artfully woven of gold-wire, sate close upon his breast, so that through the meshes peeped forth the velvet of the dark-green frock, which

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was edged with golden embroidery, and, spreading freely over the hip in graceful folds, waved downwards to the knee. A light silver morion, with rich emblems, surmounted by a plume of various colours, adorned and protected the Minstrel's head; upon his left arm glittered a little splendid shield, about the middle of which was wound a garland, green as grass; and the long shining sword clanked in its brazen sheath against its gold-chased belt, as if clamouring for battle.

Arnald beckoned to the esquire who was behind, and, giving him the shield, received from him a beautiful lyre. While still they rode, he touched it sweetly, and sang to its notes this song:

"Dear native land, thou seem'st to be
A part itself of memory;
Oh! how familiar to the soul
Thy meadows bloom, thy waters roll.
Borne onwards by the muses' pow'r,
I've praised thee oft in sportive hour;
But now a darker hour is near

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When love is shown by sword and spear.
Leave then, thy gentle tunes, my lyre,
And swell thy chords to songs of fire!
We part not yet; thou shalt with me
To war and glorious victory.
The knight rides on to battle-deed,
Plunges and springs the gallant steed,
Around the Moorish numbers bleed,
And then—if so it please high heaven
Thy song shall be to glory given.
Dear native land, thou sem'st to be
A part itself of memory."

As the song died away, the horsemen found themselves in a shady valley, at the end of which a little castle was visible, of antiquated structure. Arnald gave the instrument to his esquire, and again took the shield upon his arm, as he murmured to himself, "The old hero of Vergi would lose half the pleasure of our meeting, if I did not come before him in the full equipments of a warrior. Now, perhaps by the pressure of the times and the arrogance of the heathens, he sees me in the path, he so much desired, not only as an

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honourable champion, but as one whom the soldiers and even the chiefs esteem above most others—God grant increase thereto."

In the meantime he was approaching, with melancholy impatience, still nearer to the castle, where so noble a branch of the noble house of Vergi had protected him through many years, and had favoured his ascent to its knightly honours. A thousand delightful recollections arose, in the evening coolness, from the shrubs, and the waters, and the clouds. He felt more keenly than ever that the fame of a warrior is essential to the fame of a genuine minstrel, and rejoiced, that with this disposition he could better understand the old Sir Walter than heretofore, and even so be better understood by him.

But it often falls out in life as if we were to be most sternly interrupted in the very moment that we thought to open our heart to one we love, in all its

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clearness; perhaps it is to make us feel inwardly that the true eternal union first rises beyond the grave, like a victorious sun from the manifold storms and whirlpools of what here below is exclusively called life.

The door of Sir Walter's castle stood open, and in part too the windows; the evening breeze sighed and whistled through the halls; in the court-yard the grass had here and there begun to peep through the crevices of the pavement.

Full of dark foreboding, Arnald gave the horse to his esquire, and hastened into the castle; but all within looked so solemnly, nay almost holily, that he soon began to tread with slow and measured step as if he feared to wake some object of reverence from its slumber.

Without having met a single being he at last reached the narrow, lofty turret-chamber, where the old knight was accustomed to sit in fine weather and read his books of chivalry at the

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open casement. Every thing was, here, as usual; the windows were up; the illuminated vellum manuscripts, fastened with their clasps of gold, were spread upon the table; the great elbow-chair stood before it as if the kind old master had just gone out, while the warm sunbeams sparkled and played familiarly on all.—Arnald knew what had happened.—In silence he wept, and sought the grave, which he readily found. On entering the garden he perceived a small stone-cross upon a gentle declivity beneath the shade of two enormous fir-trees. The grave was covered with a black marble slab, on which these words were engraved in golden characters:

HERE IN PURSUANCE OF HIS OWN REVERED WISH
LIETH THE BODY OF
SIR WALTER OF VERGI.
WE, HIS LANDMEN AND NEIGHBOURS,
WHO SURNAME HIM
THE GOOD,
HAVE ERECTED THIS.

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Below were sculptured the dates of his birth and death, and near them his unstained armorial bearings.

Arnald seated himself by the hillock and softly sang this song, beating time to it with his drawn sword upon the golden shield:

"Soft 'neath thy waving Lindens, rest,
That once wav'd o'er thy living breast:
Whilst I upon the foeman sweep,
Dream thou of me in gentle sleep;
And soon perchance my deeds may beam
Bright as the shadows of that dream;
Then, when the trumpet wakes the dead
From out their dark and wormy bed,
Then shall thy voice be heard, 'My son,
My Minstrel-boy, 'twas nobly done.'"

Wonderfully strengthened, Arnald remounted his horse and rode downwards to the inhabitants of the nearest valley. From them he learnt that it was Sir Walter's last will, his castle should remain open and solitary, and just in the state he left it, as a chapel for the honest and weary wanderer.

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CHAPTER II.

ARNALD now directed his course to the castle of the Viscount Bisiers; this celebrated hero had set up his standard for the protection of his oppressed country, and whoever felt in himself strength and courage for the right, hastened to join his squadrons. Arnald knew him by report only, but this had carried his name, and that of his countess, the lovely noble Alearda, so fair and so gloriously through the world, that the Minstrel's breast glowed with a two-fold thirst of battle, in the idea of fighting under such a chieftain.

Day and night had Arnald hastened to reach the place of meeting, and early in the morning broke out from a blooming wood, when he saw Castle Bisiers rising on a rich plain in all its splen-

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dour; he spurred on his noble horse, which gladly strained his fainting spirits, neighing loudly to the dawn, as if he suspected the near end of his travel. High beat Arnald's presaging heart, and higher yet when he saw the glittering squadrons of horse and foot in full march to the sea-shore. In fancy he heard their merry songs, and his breast was seized with a feeling akin to pain to think that he was not yet amongst them. Quicker and quicker he hurried towards the castle, so that his esquire could scarcely follow him at a distance, and at length stopped his reeking, breathless horse at a farm-yard, where shields hung upon the hedges, spears stuck into the ground, and helmets glittering upon the posts, announced the presence of a squadron.—Several horsemen advanced to greet him.

"Welcome, noble Sir," said the eldest of them; "Your appearance speaks the object of your travel. Half

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an hour ago the Viscount Bisiers broke up with the first division of the army; be pleased therefore to stay with us, for to-morrow we follow him, and shall certainly be in good time for the battle; your gallant war-horse is in need of rest."

Arnald still continuing in doubt, the horseman added:—"Or would you rather ride your noble steed to death, than arrive an hour later? Spare it for the attack upon the Saracens; for that nothing can be too good, but thus to ruin him were a pity."

The Minstrel gave his hand in friendly compliance, and sprang from the saddle. By this time too his squire had come up, and now all met in the fellowship of arms right cordially.

With the morning cup Arnald sang many a noble war-song to the chieftains, who glowed, as they listened, in breathless ecstacy; all would know the name of their new associate, and soon the joyful news ran through the second line that

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in their ranks would fight the gallant Troubadour, Arnald of Maraviglia.

Towards evening the Minstrel ascended a near hill, whence he gazed in solitary silence on castle Bisiers; between lay the splendour of a blooming garden, interspersed with canals and winding streams that peeped through the shrubs as clear and as bright as silver, while the mighty trees looked over all, like solemn and heroic warders from the olden time.

And now passed through the shaded ways, a tall, thin, female figure, in garments bright as snow, that flowed about her with a sort of holy mystery. Several women followed her, together with a nurse who carefully carried in her arms a young child, dressed in linen and ribbands of various colours. Although the lady glided on in still sublimity, almost without a motion of the head or hand, yet Arnald felt certain that she was speaking to her train in words of

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grave, yet inspiring import. At length she took the child from her woman, and bent over it in kisses, so deeply, that the veil streamed far away from her head,—and all all again were lost in the deep arches of the trees.

"Oh! he, who has been honoured to look on the features of that face!"—sighed Arnald, half aloud,—and checked himself on hearing close by the step and breathing of a man. On turning round, a friendly peasant greeted him, and said; "Is it not true, my good soldier, all is warm about your heart since the glorious vision in yon garden? Oh, when once you see her near!—and the sweet child that she bore to our Prince two years since,—the little Countess Bertha!—Such a blessing is often granted to us on our harvest-days and holy festivals; for, we are the subjects of this celebrated, spotless angel, the Countess Alearda, the wife of Viscount Bisiers; she protects and fosters us, and makes our life an

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heaven on earth, as if she were a messenger sent down by God from Paradise."

In reality the peasant said nothing new to Arnald, and yet these simple words moved him beyond expression. He pressed a few gold coins into the hand of the speaker, who thanked him heartily, and murmured as he went, "Another benefit from being near the lovely Countess! scarce a blessing in the country but what comes through her."

Arnald in deep thought returned to his brothers in arms at the farm-yard.

He had been long expected, and indeed, sought for every where; a page had been sent by the Countess Alearda to invite him to a conversation with her at Castle Bisiers, for she knew and honoured the fame and minstrelsy of the noble Troubadour.

Arnald, rejoicing at such an order, set out with his young guide immediately.

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The stars were already looking down, high and brilliant, from the blue heaven of a spring-night; a holy feeling thrilled through Maraviglia's breast; he thought, it was perhaps the near decision of his country's fate, that stirred him to such ecstacy, but he could not conceal from himself, that there was something yet beyond, as he cast his eyes upwards and saw the constellation, which Altarbol had left unnamed, now again glittering in all its glory, and just above his head; the thought rose within him, "Is not its name to you, Alearda?"

Castle Bisiers was an old building, large and lofty, with many steps and arched ways winding through its whole extent. Arnald had long before heard the tradition of a spectre, an ancestor of the house, who was said at times to walk there, in light, glittering armour when he presaged life and happiness, but in the dark vestments of a monk when his errand was death or evil.

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And now, when the page opened and closed the doors of the dimly lighted staircase, it seemed to Arnald as if the prophetic apparition must somewhere meet him, and foretel the destiny of his dear, his oppressed country. All around acquired a mystic and almost supernatural character.

At length they reached the apartment of the Countess; the page went forward to announce the Minstrel, then signed to him to come forward, and himself left the chamber. The walls glittered to Arnald on his entrance with a profusion of flowers and splendid saintly pictures, and at the same time from the opposite door of a darker room appeared, as if on air, the shining figure of the Lady Alearda; brighter than her snow-bright garments was the brow that beamed from her dark locks; her smile was full of exalted mildness; her gracious bending, dignified and earnest. Arnald bowed his head more lowly than

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he had done in all his life till then; with difficulty could he speak a few words of humblest greeting; it was to him as if he stood before one enchanted, and yet before a saint. At this moment the castle-clock struck the hour in solemn accents:—"It strikes the decisive hour of thy whole life!" said an unknown spirit in Arnald's bosom.

The Countess motioned him to an opposite chair, and a conversation of deep import arose, beginning, it is true, on brighter art, but passing quickly into earnest life, for in pure minds art and life are one and the same inseparably.

"We have of late been flattered," said Alearda, "that the heathens have given up all ideas of an invasion. It is said the dreadful Moorish Prince, Tarfe, has heard so much of the Viscount's preparations, that he lets his enterprize sleep for the present. What think you, noble Troubadour?"

"Lady," answered Arnald, "what

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boots it, that the tempest should go on lowering over these coasts? May God avert such a fate from us. Let us nobly conquer, if so it may be; let us nobly perish, the sword in our hand, if so it must be;—but one of the two without delay.

"Humanly considered, you are right," said Alearda. "Yet your songs are too pious for me to believe that you speak to God also in this precise manner."

At this instant resounded the lively war-music of the squadrons, passing by the castle: Arnald's cheeks glowed, and his eye sparkled.

"Heavily!" he exclaimed with a sigh, "most heavily, would such a dispensation from God weigh on many a brave heart; but it would not be the first time that a father from wise affection had refused to his children the boon too ardently desired. The will of the Lord be done!"

"And, master Arnald of Maraviglia,"

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added the Countess earnestly and solemnly, "it is your part besides to tarry in your native land, even during the sultry lowering of the tempest. There is something delightful in the careless roaming of the troubadour from land to land, but only when golden peace is upon the country: in difficult times there is a task of graver import for the minstrel; it is noble chivalry to draw the sword for one's native home, but there is a chivalry more quiet, less noted, of tenfold burthen, and even therefore of transcendent merit: and, that is, to suffer with your compatriots, and keep alive in their hearts the eternal flame for the day of its availing."

"I waver not,—I stir not from Provence!" replied Arnald firmly,—"so long as the Moorish prince and his squadrons be it near, or be it far, threaten the holy faith and freedom of my brothers."

"God be praised! I have not erred in

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you," said Alearda, and dismissed him with a gracious smile.

When Arnald again came into the open air, he sang with a glad heart these verses to the silent landscape:

"Oh! welcome, Battle, to this breast;
Oh! welcome, hour of peaceful Rest;
And even thou, Uncertainty,
Art no less welcome unto me;
Thrice blessed are the ways of heaven,
And, as from thence ye all are given,
Be welcome all, whate'er your name;
And if, perchance, the inward flame
Should burn too fiercely, well I know
The image that will quench its glow."

He looked up to the star he loved so well, and greeted it,—"Alearda!"—At the same time he struck a full chord upon his lyre, that echoed in transport to the golden sparks of heaven.

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CHAPTER III.

In a blooming valley, not far from castle Bisiers, lay a large minster, glittered about by lakes, the most revered place of worship in the country. There, it was the custom to bury the noblest and wisest princes of the land in a splendid vault, prepared for them in the neighbourhood of the high altar.

In the same evening that Arnald left Castle Bisiers, he was elected leader of a troop of light-horse, and the next morning passed through the sacred valley at the cool hour of day-break. As they approached the house of God, the chief of the second division ordered a general halt, and invited all to pray by the graves of the illustrious dead; for, the Abbot of Saint Anne's cloister had come thither at the Vis-

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count's request to bless them all to death or victory. All dismounted in haste from their horses, coupled them together, and left them to the care of some peasants. Then the whole warlike array passed on in silence, that was broken only by the clang of arms through the high and echoing arch-ways.

The vault, where rested the brave and the wise, was now open, and from out the deep darkness glittered the escutcheons and the golden inscriptions on their coffins; the squadrons ranged themselves around in a half circle. And now stepped forward, with the tears of enthusiasm in his eyes, the Abbot of Saint Anne's, in whom Arnald joyfully recognized his friend, Altarbol. The noble churchman advanced into the middle of the warriors and thus addressed them:

"The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be with you,—Amen!—Greetings to ye, the flower of this land, who

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stand upon its noblest sepulchres,—greetings to ye on your dangerous path which leads to glory, or in part also to the grave, but a grave not less honorable than those which here remind you of the great achievements of the ages that are passed.

" There is but one life,—the life in God, who reveals himself to us in truth; all the rest is mistaken trifling. There is no truth without freedom; and of our freedom ye are the defenders. Ye men and youths, I was called that I might bless you to victory or death; but I bless you to victory and life; for I feel it glowingly in my inmost self that none will turn them from the foe in coward consideration of their safety; and thus, life is irrevocably yours, whether the flowers of the next spring burst from your battle-graves, or whether as victorious warriors, ye are crowned with garlands at the dance and at the banquet: Perhaps, too, there may be some one of

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this host so highly devoted, that he may find a place amongst the brave and the wise that rest below, and then with the next May, we shall bring the garland to him in his solemn resting-place.

"And now, you the flower of Provence, rise up with God, and beat the heathens forcefully to earth. The Lord announces it to you through the mouth of me, a consecrated priest, and gives you his peace amidst the battles of this world.—Amen!"

Altarbol was scarcely able to speak from holy emotion. That which came from the heart went to the heart. Solemnly, their eyes filled with glowing tears,—the warriors again walked out, and mounted their impatient chargers. Just as Arnald was in the saddle, a strong hand grasped his; it was the Prior, who said, "I knew full well that you would not be wanting. Even yesterday I sought you anxiously in the first division; but the spirit whispered to me that you would

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yet come in good time for the battle. Be firm, my son, and cheerful. Great trials await us, and then there will be need of the example and encouragement of the Minstrel."—

With this he blessed him and returned to the Abbey, while the squadrons marched on in silent gladness amidst the odours of the spring.

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CHAPTER IV.

SCARCELY had the first division of the Provençals encamped upon the shore opposite to the islands of Hieres, and spread their watches along the coast, than sail after sail was seen in the light of the full moon, rising, as it were, from out the ocean. Women and children fled with shrieks and tears, while the warriors hailed the near day of battle with exultation. Messengers were sent out hastily to the second line to quicken its march, and as it consisted almost entirely of horse, it advanced from the earliest dawn of day in cheerful speed, till towards the evening, the sea, and the enemies' fleet, were at once visible to all eyes.

Tarfe, the bold Moorish Prince, had too experienced an eye not to choose,

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for the place of disembarkation, a certain mole that stretched far out into the ocean; on either side of the landing-place he anchored several boats, manned with his best cross-bows, and armed with a fearful provision of Greek fire, that their raking shots might protect his troops, till they had got firm footing, and could advance to the attack decidedly.

But the Viscount Bisiers was a chief of no less experience. Well knowing that the Moors would choose that precise spot for their landing, he had fixed his head-quarters there, hoping to burst through the cross-fire with a sudden charge of all his cavalry, and drive back the enemy on their ships. When the horse had advanced for this purpose, a great part of the Moorish force stood already on the mole, and it was clear that they intended to intrench themselves. The young and princely Tarfe rode up and down in front, in glittering majesty.

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The squadrons of the second division now unfolded themselves, as if upon the wing, from a village circled by blooming fruit-trees, and Arnald, with a joyful consciousness of his early experience, assisted mainly in the evolution. All now stood there, spread over the wide down, and glittering in arms; upon the tongue of land the enemy's foot rushed together in evident confusion, closing around Tarfe, who, from his horse proudly overlooked the beginning battle, and spear upon spear bristled, like the quills of a porcupine, on that side, where any attack was yet possible. On board the ships the bowmen, and those who used the Greek fire, were ready with their destructive weapons.

"Provence for ever! — We are now, my brave warriors, upon fame and death!" —So shouted from the right wing the powerful voice of the Viscount, and the heavy-armed and almost-gigantic hero, thundered through the ranks on his lofty

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war-horse. Arnald could not see his chieftain's face for the closed beaver, but it seemed to him as if his eyes shot fire from the brazen junctures.

And now the chieftain stood before the centre. — He waved his flashing sword high above his plume, and shouted, "In the name of Jesus and all the Saints! —upon them!" — And the trumpets sounded and the squadrons spurred along in a cloud of dust against the expecting Moors, as if in rivalry.

The fire, and the bolts, and the arrows, flew from the ships, right and left, upon the wings of the assailants. Whoever was touched by the Greek fire, fell immediately to earth, burnt up, without a groan, and, even where the iron shots did force a cry of pain, it was hardly heard in the storm-speed of the charge.

"Forwards! forwards! Hew me down the heathens!" exclaimed Arnald, as he rushed on far before his squadron.

Suddenly he found himself in smoke

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and dust amongst the enemy. He had ridden down a lancer without perceiving him; his good sword struck a second; and his companions behind, and by his side, laid about them mightily.

From these he turned to attack a Moorish band that had hitherto remained unassailed, but, when close before it, his steed was mortally wounded by an arrow from the ships, and the gallant creature rolled upon him: his own troops rushed forward without perceiving him, and it thrilled like lightning through his brain,—"Here I lie, like my great grandsire of whom Sir Walter told me; but if he would not yield to Christians, still less will I yield myself to Heathens."

And now he saw several coming upon him with bloody lances; but he looked death firmly and patiently in the eye, scarcely able, under the weight of his dead horse, to move his falchion. At this moment the Provençal knights again broke in upon the Moors. All of the

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enemy, that could fly, did fly; the Christians returned with shouts of victory to the coast; and, when Arnald had worked himself from beneath his steed, he saw the sails of the proud Tarfe already swelling far out upon the ocean, while the Provençals led back a numerous cavalcade of heathen prisoners.

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CHAPTER V.

ARNALD yet stood by his dead war-horse, in earnest, but pleasing meditation, when the Viscount Bisiers, informed of the Minstrel's absence, came towards him with a splendid train of knights, and stretched out to him his victorious hand in friendly greeting; from the open helmet beamed the inspiring features of a hero. Arnald took the proffered right-hand of his chieftain with mingled gladness and respect.

Several strong squadrons now marched right and left, with anxious orders from the Viscount, some along the coast, and others towards the high-lands, to spy out the direction of the Saracen's fleet. The chief then ordered to be brought forward a beautiful white Arabian horse, richly caparisoned in Moorish splendour, and

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proffered it to the Minstrel in compensation for his fallen steed. Arnald accepted the knightly gift with gratitude; he swung himself lightly into the broad gold stirrup, and, after he had seated himself upright in the unaccustomed saddle, rode the noble prize up and down with daring dexterity, and then gave it in charge to his esquire.

"You ride it well, Arnald," said the Viscount; "but he also rode well, whom the charger bore in battle. It was a young, tall, thin Moorish horseman, in sable garments, with polished ornaments upon his breast. I took him at first for Tarfe, but, when I approached more closely, I found him to be a youth who covered the retreat of the Prince. I was just about to assail him, and he, with equal desire of battle, swung his sabre round his head, when a body of Moorish infantry pressed between us in their flight. I could not directly force my way through them, and my noble

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opponent,—I saw it well—did not like to trample on his countrymen. At this instant one of them, hit by a bolt from their own ships, fell to the ground, and cried out piteously not to be left in the power of the enemy, upon which sprang my black warrior, light as a breath, from his saddle, caught up the bleeding man, and, half carrying, half leading, bore him to the vessels. Had it been Tarfe himself, I could not then have pursued him any longer; but his noble white Arabian ran, masterless, towards my steed, and I seized him as a memorial. Think you thereby, dear Arnald, of the noble Moorish horseman."

The Provençals were stretched upon the fresh green turf for the feast of victory; Arnald, according to the custom of those poetic times, had his place close by the chieftain. The cup went round, and hearts were carelessly open in mingled conversation.

A young knight—he was called Guy of Hauteroche,—took, as it seemed, a

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particular delight in Arnald's presence; he loved to direct his conversation to him, listened attentively when he spoke, and found a thousand ways of pleasing him, so that Arnald almost believed Guy to be a young companion of his art, who wished to place himself under his direction, as a minstrel. But this idea vanished when the courteous Guy took it into his head to sing. For, not enough that his otherwise pleasing voice ran from one discord into another, without the singer's suspecting any thing amiss, but he abused the rhyme, and sense, and measure, with equal simplicity, till at last the Viscourt, laughing heartily, was obliged to request his forbearance, a request to which the singer assented with no less mirth on his part. In all the youth did there was a charm, a warmth, which in a moment won to him the most opposite dispositions, provided only they had the same goodness that characterized himself.

The conversation now turned upon

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the Moorish Prince, and how he must be vexed and ashamed at his defeat, and many witty sarcasms were launched against the fugitive. During this talk the Viscount remained silent; at last he said to the Minstrel in a whisper,—"Maraviglia, these youths fancy themselves already high upon the hill, but we have yet a weary way to travel; more particularly, if I interpret aright the clouds of smoke that rise yonder from the hills upon the coast. Begin some restraining song of earnest admonition.

Arnald seized his lyre; at the first sound, he drew from the strings, all were silent and attentive.

And thus he began his song:

"In his mild grace, the King of Kings
Upon our host the victory flings;
But yet he wills our life should flow,
An even tide in weal or woe.
And, read ye what prepares his pow'r,
E'en while ye laugh in banquet bower?
Take heed ye fall not, watch and wake;
'Neath summer roses lurks the snake.

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" The sweetest day of sweetest Spring,
Ne'er moves on so unstain'd a wing,
But whisp'ring grass, and leaves that fly,
May token give of tempests nigh.
Ne'er lights the sweetest marriage hour
The torch and dance in hymen's bow'r,
But bodings dark may tell how near,
The wreath of death* and cypress bier.

" Enjoy mirth's banquet while ye may,
But ready for a sadder day:
Then, come the foeman when he will,
His grasp shall work you little ill,
Martyrs of faith, and glory's light,
Be ready all for danger's night:
Beyond the grave a brighter sun
Will make all clear when life is done."

The song was over, and the leaders looked down still and thoughtful; strange forebodings arose within their bosoms. And that was well—for even then rode down several messengers from the hills and the coast, pale and terrified. The Viscount spoke in whispers with them;

* In allusion to the cypress wreath that, in German funerals, is usually flung upon the coffin.—T.

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all began to look from the goblets to their weapons.

"Knights!" said the Viscount, advancing with still earnestness into the middle of the circle, — "While we were fighting with the Moorish Prince here, a second army was by his orders disembarked at another place, and the landing has succeeded. He has since joined them with his beaten division, and is in full march with this superior force for Castle Bisiers, to which he is much nearer than ourselves. Let then the castle burn, in God's name: we shall march after the enemy, cut him off from the coast, and thus destroy the entire serpent-nest at a single blow. Be good enough, knights and gentlemen, to betake yourselves to your squadrons; I will give orders to mount immediately."

The deliberate calmness of the chief produced a corresponding feeling on every mind, so that the dispositions for a remove took place with order and

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tranquillity. One only of all the leaders was pale as death, and he was called Arnald of Maraviglia: yet he drew up his soldiers with his usual energy and coolness.

Count Bisiers beckoned him aside, saying, "Tell me, noble Troubadour, what it is that so powerfully affects you. It must concern our general enterprize, for on your own account—your fame is known, and you have this day honourably approved it—on your own account, your cheeks would never lose their colour."

"God forbid!" replied Arnald, and an almost angry red drove the paleness from his face. "And yet my anxiety does not concern the general enterprize. The enemy presses forward to Castle Bisiers, and therein is the Countess Alearda!"

"Then I rightly understood you from the first," said the Viscount kindly. "Of noble dames a noble minstrel is

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the best protector. Forth then! take with you your light troop, and forward by the nearest road to Castle Bisiers. One single brave squadron may perhaps get in advance of the enemy, and, if you find there the Countess, take her under your protection."

Oh! how gratefully did Arnald bend before his chieftain. Oh! how joyfully did he haste with his soldiers in the path to Castle Bisiers.

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CHAPTER VI.

It was a calm night, a little before the rising of the moon, when Arnald reached the castle. He carefully drew up his bands on the side where the enemy might be expected, and held all the passes strictly watched. Then, leaving his horse with the troops, he went to wake the Countess for her journey, with as little alarm as possible. Dark and gigantic rose the building in the night that was scarcely less dark; in vain Arnald looked that a warder would show himself on the turrets, or a lamp glimmer through the windows; sound and light had died away. Already he began to fear the necessity of ringing the great bell upon the draw-bridge, or of winding his horn, and thus, perhaps, alarming the Countess from her calm and pious slum-

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bers. But how was he astonished to find the draw-bridge down!—how much more so, when he saw both wings of the high-arched entrance standing open, and leaving a free passage into the castle-court, that was dark as death, and silent as the grave. A dreadful foreboding thrilled through his soul. Had the heathens already been there? Yet, as far as he could distinguish in the darkness, there appeared no trace of violence. All seemed quiet and in order. He ascended a flight of steps, which, as he had remarked a little time before, led to the guard-room, where at that time stood a band of armed knights. The door gave way at the first touch, but the chamber was dark and still as the entrance and the court. In going forward his foot struck against some pieces of armour, which fell with a loud clatter, and almost bore him with them to the ground.

"Do ye sleep, warders?" cried Ar.

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nald, slightly shuddering. A dull echo pealed along the wall the only answer. He bent down over the pieces of armour; they were empty, and seemed to consist only of rusty iron, with torn straps of leather, and mouldy buckles. Dust showered out upon him as he touched them.

While he yet paused in doubt, it seemed to him as if from a room close by there came a shimmer, half like the glance of armour, half like the glimmering of a light. He hastened within, but found nobody, and all again was dark. Through the open window the night-wind blew in upon him with gentle whispers.

An anxious gloom crept over the Troubadour in this mysterious scene. He leaned out of the window with a fervent longing for the living images of heaven and earth, of the woods, and the streams, and the stars. Just then the moon began

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to rise over the near grove of plane-trees, and the spirits of the solitary one became more calm and more assured.

Without, before the castle-moat, stood a crowd of men, whispering mysteriously in the shade, and all seemed to be looking, and indeed, pointing at him. Nothing was here to be feared from the Saracens, for, in that respect he was safe by the disposition of his cavalry; but so much the more unintelligible, and almost spectral, appeared this dark multitude; he would have given much, to know that a distinct, substantial human being was behind him in the noiseless building.

It almost seemed as if his wish was to be fulfilled; for, at the instant a beam of light shot through the narrow, gloomy chamber, and, when Arnald turned round, there stood close behind him a lofty knight in complete armour, who looked out of the same window with friendly greetings to the people.

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The multitude before the moat murmured, as it should seem, a timid prayer, and lifted up their hands in thankfulness towards the casement.

Arnald was about to address his companion, and offer him the front place, when he suddenly perceived with horror that the figure swelled up in gigantic greatness to the centre arch, and turned upon him a face of antient features, pale as snow, and kindly smiling, but of brightness that almost dazzled him. At the same time the apparition pointed earnestly to the door and stairs, and a tinkling like the sound of strings whispered audibly along the walls:—

> "In safety is the flower;
> Seek fame in other bower;
> For here is now my hour."

Arnald did not dare to disobey, and hastened down to the crowd before the castle-gate. These he found in a state of joyful excitation: they were the inhabitants

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of the land,—shepherds, ploughmen, and citizens, just as they were assembled by hope and necessity; and now the castle-spirit had appeared to them at the window in the bright and promising splendour of his armour; so that, in truth, it was over Arnald's shoulder that the look of the gigantic spectre had fallen upon the vale below. A cold shudder ran through the marrow of his bones.

The spirit, however, had announced success and victory by his bright appearance, and Alearda besides was saved: warned by the faithful shepherds, she had set out the day before with all her train, and passed by a safe road into the neighbouring lands that were secured on all sides. Nothing immediate, therefore, could be done by Arnald for the defence of his mistress, and truly that grieved his heart, which only a few hours before had been throbbing with so much transport.

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CHAPTER VII.

MEN who love God, and who are struggling for the right, seldom retain for a long time that weak, arrogant regret, which whispers: "Another has done the deed, and not thyself!" They ask *what* has happened and not *by whom*, and their soul is again blythe and cheerful. So was it with Arnald, and he rode forth joyfully in the shimmer of the morning to that part whence Tarfe was expected. From the people of the country he learnt that the Prince was yet far off; he resolved therefore to lay an ambush for him in the woody, entangled lands through which he must unavoidably pass, hoping thus to scatter the enemy in the first alarm, or at all events keep him back with considerable loss, and thus give time for the arrival of the Viscount.

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His skirmishers had already gone on in advance to the chosen spot, while he himself watched with the main body behind the hill, a few horsemen only before him as outposts, upon the heights.

In this moment of expectation, the various joys and sorrows of his life passed like shadows through his brain; and, if at times a profound melancholy gained the upper hand, he would look at the glittering falchion on his hip, and then feel in all its nobleness, how sweet it is to bear arms for one's country in the hour of its danger.

From the near woods resounded a solemn chaunt; it was the Monks of Saint Ann's Cloister, with the noble Prior Altarbol, at their head; they were coming with refreshments of every kind to the Provençal army whose presence in the country they had learnt from rumour.

In his present situation, Arnald might venture to let his warriors indulge with-

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out care in the proffered meal. All in mirthful confidence sate down amongst cups, and flasks, and glasses, upon the dewy spring-turf.

Much was Altarbol delighted to meet in the leader of the squadron his valiant pupil, the fame of whose deeds in the landing-battle, had already reached him; on this day he did not shame to pledge Arnald, in the noble wine of Xeres*, to future victories in the cause of God, and of his native country.

The first impartments between the two friends belonged to the memory of the noble Walter. Altarbol told, with fond minuteness, how quickly, and, at the same time, how gently, the pious hero had slumbered into death. "To you, my Minstrel-knight,"—so he concluded his tale,—"to you, he could send no other charge, for speech then failed him; but in his face I could read that he prayed for you in

* Sherry.

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his last moments, and his blessing is with you for time and for eternity."

A few tears dropped from Arnald's eyes upon the hopeful May-green of the meadows. Both for a time were silent. Then again the conversation began, and turned upon the danger and deliverance of their beloved country, when the Minstrel said:

"My dear, my reverend friend, solve me but a single doubt; and none will ride against the foeman more cheerily than myself."

"Speak, my son," replied the Monk, and gazed upon him in wonder, nay almost in doubt.

"What," asked Arnald in a subdued voice,—"What has induced the Countess Alearda, who is otherwise so prudent, not only to leave the castle without a garrison, in her flight, but to let the gate and doors remain wide open? Father, I live wholly in the image of my lady; she is the angel who points out to me my right way on earth,—the angel

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who purifies, and exalts, and admonishes me of Heaven. I would therefore see every thing in her actions as clear and noble, as she showed herself lately to my sight, and if the least thing therein is troubled, my soul is troubled also."

Again the Monk's prophetic anger woke upon his stern eye-brows. After a pause he exclaimed:—"I suspected from the very first that your question was that of folly. What is the use of doubt or inquiry in a time, like the present? A true man finds consolation in his own breast, or finds it nowhere. But that you should ask me about the ways and deeds of the exalted Alearda, is a greater folly than any I could have suspected; I should call you boy, had you not shown yourself so much a man. Of that high dame, we have all to learn, nor you, nor I, nor the departed Walter, nor any man, excepted. Whatever she wills and acts, is pure light and truth; and if she says—"Do this!—

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Leave that undone!" a noble temper has not long to hesitate; it does, and leaves undone after the will of that blessed angel, who is sent and taught by God, however little in her humbleness, she will, or can perceive it.

"As to what regards her present action, to that indeed my own weak perception reaches, and so far I can open your feeble sight. Castle Bisiers could not, of course, be maintained by the few troops that were sufficient for the conduct of the lady: why then defend, or why bar, that which after all could neither be defended nor barred against an enemy? Any thing in the world but half-measures! sooner may the heathens' love of plunder discharge itself unopposed against the fortress; and as Castle Bisiers towered above all the dwellings of the land, so let it above them all attract the lightnings of the tempest; or if heaven will protect the lordly man-

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sion, let the most defenceless house be protected at the same time with it."

"Oh! our exalted lady!" cried the Minstrel; "Our noble chief too said, 'Let my castle burn!'—It was spoken in the spirit of Alearda."

"Thus do you rightly understand her," replied Altarbol; "believe me, whatever we here speak or do worthily, is but the reflection of her loveliness according to the will of the Most High."

In the mean-time Arnald's skirmishers returned; the enemy had not yet advanced to the covered country; and now, burning with enthusiasm and accompanied by the blessings of his friend, the knightly Minstrel entered with his rejoicing troops upon the woodlands.

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CHAPTER VIII.

CONCEALED in a pleasant thicket of olive-trees and fragrant shrubs, Arnald had waited for the foe more than one day already, and still the most advanced of his detachments could find no sign of the approaching Moors. It then became evident that Tarfe had given up his expedition gainst Castle Bisiers, and haste was requisite to form a junction with the army of the Viscount.

Thoughtful, and again deceived in his hopes, Arnald with his squadron left the shades that at first had seemed to promise him such certain garlands, and again turned towards the coast, where, sure enough, the Moorish Prince had taken up a strong position, not daring to leave the main body of the Provençals in his rear, and where, on this very day, he was

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attacked by the Viscount with all his force.

Maraviglia had not advanced far, when the distant tumult of the battle was borne towards him; his esquire leaped from the saddle, and having laid his ear to the earth, exclaimed, "In truth, noble Sir, they have met; I hear plainly from the ground the tramp of charging squadrons, and moreover, a strange hollow roaring, which must proceed from the Greek fire-balls, that the Moor is no doubt throwing this time in abundance."

The whole party rushed, as if on wings, to the appointed place.

Soon, from a gentle slope, the whole field of battle was visible to Maraviglia. The Provençals were advancing against a strongly intrenched height, from which flew the bolts and arrows of the Moor, and,—as the esquire had well supposed,—the Greek fire also, in overwhelming torrents.

"Forward! my brave companions! Forward, and upon them!" exclaimed Ar-

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nald,—and all urged on their tired horses, now with the spur, and now with cheering call, to the decisive point of battle.

The Minstrel's Arabian was still unwearied. He rushed foward with his troop to the spot, where the heroic Viscount rode in front of the army.—"She is safe, for you show cheerfully," cried the general; and he looked in Arnald's eyes with the joy of confidence. The story of what had happened was in the hurry of the moment told quickly and concisely; whereupon the Viscount said, "Thanks, thanks, my noble master of Maraviglia. Keep your squadrons together, and join the left wing of the cavalry: we shall try a fresh attack immediately."

Arnald took his place well-pleased, without delay; and now the collected squadrons charged resolutely, and in close ranks, up the hill, that seemed almost in a blaze with the Greek fire.

It fell to Arnald's right,—it fell to Arnald's left; but the will of Heaven

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turned from him most wonderfully the whizzing bolts of fire. Already he thought the flight of victory was begun a second time and more decidedly than before, but it was exactly the reverse. The Viscount had only ventured this attack to allure the enemy from their almost inaccessible position, either by the fear of his glittering squadrons, or by the desire of measuring their force with his. In the mean time Tarfe's military foresight had not gone to sleep. The brave Moor restrained himself and kept firm in his position, well aware, that no horse could climb these abrupt heights, and that both wings were sufficiently covered by the water and the woods. The Provençal infantry had, in the early part of the battle, so exhausted itself by its heroic efforts, that there could be no thought but of safe and honourable retreat.

At the foot, therefore, of the steepest declivity, the Viscount halted, commanded the infantry to retreat through the lower

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grounds and villages, and kept his station upon the plain with his brave horsemen, amidst the shafts and fire-bolts of the enemy.

The chief beckoned to the Minstrel, and in an instant he was at his side.

"Your presence, brave Troubadour, is less needful to your squadrons than to me; remain, therefore, by my side, and if you see any thing in regard to the posture of our cavalry, let me have your opinion."

Arnald truly felt the honour which was shown to him in this order; but an indignant voice cried from his inmost self—a lost battle! an utterly lost battle!—and thus for a long time they both remained silent amidst the shower of flame, without the one or the other being injured.

At length came a leader of infantry, upon a mule swift as wind, and announced that all the troops had retreated through the narrow passes to their appointed station, except the captain Lanza-

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rossa; this noble warrior, unable to restrain his impetuosity, was even then attempting from the left wing a fresh attack upon the mountain.

In the same moment was heard the cry of "Vive Provence!" from the advancing squadrons, who were seen victoriously storming the nearest height, at their head the brave Lanzarossa with his levelled partizan. A warm tear forced itself into Arnald's eye; he saw with melancholy pleasure the courage of his landsman which was yet unable to turn the gloomy fortune of the day. The eyes of the chieftain, too, were wet.

But a short time,—and a fearful stream of fire swept away the daring Lanzarossa.—

"Fare thee well, brave heart!" said the Viscount.

The little troop of the fallen chieftain, which was now almost melted away, began its retreat with still and mornful resolution. The Moors were heard rejoicing on the mountain—Oh! how Arnald's heart

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bled with anguish! Oh how much easier and fairer had it been to have bled with wounds on the battle-field of victory! Then occurred to him Alearda's words of that arduous chivalry, which carries with it no glitter nor outward mirth, and he again looked on the fiery torrents without emotion.

"Maraviglia," — said the Viscount earnestly,—" do you think I can answer it to God to keep the horse here any longer?"

Arnald considered for a moment and then said,—" No, my noble chief, I believe you cannot; in case the Moorish Prince should attack that handfull of infantry, we should be best on the borders of the village to fall upon him; many a brave knight and many a good horse would so be saved."

" I see by your manner, that it is no easy thing for you to advise a retreat," replied the Viscount; " but you are right, and I thank you."

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He now ordered the banner of the cavalry to be raised, and took up the agreed position. Soon after, the remnant of Lanzarossa's troop marched through the village; the horse followed; the fire and rejoicing of the enemy no longer reached them; stilly and mournfully the camp was pitched on the other side of the mountain.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE watch-fires were blazing, and the lights of heaven glimmered down upon them; Arnald gazed on the adored constellation, which he had named Alearda.

"The Countess," said Guy of Hauteroche, who had laid down beside him in the utmost friendliness,—"The Countess would be astonished, and not much amiss either, if she knew how it had gone with us to day; she ever had her handsome head full of victories, and all sorts of glory, and now what have we? a most delightful shearing."

"The Countess would not be at all astonished," replied the Minstrel, indignantly raising himself. "The Countess announced to you the will of Heaven, and that you have hitherto done, as was your duty: but, the end is always with God, and that is nothing new to her, however

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it may be to you and such as you. Rejoice only that such an angel-light shines over your head, and perform your task cheerfully in its beams. But do not fancy that the little creeping doubts, that sometimes possess your soul, can ever ascend to her."

"I did not know that you could be so warm, Maraviglia."

"You have named me by my name, and in that is explained my conduct; all my ancestors, on great occasions, have been as I am."—At the same time he folded himself indignantly in his cloak, and, turning away from the young Hauteroche, lay down on the turf towards the fire.

After a short pause, Guy said gravely, yet with mildness: "Master of Maraviglia, I intended no offence to you, but I trust also, you, on your part, meant none to me."

"None, my brave companion," said Arnald turning to him, and he grasped his hand. "It was more the spirit of

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my race, that so blazed forth, than of myself."

"Hm!" replied Hauteroche, "you were pretty well yourself, too; but let that pass, my noble Troubadour; I love you with all my soul, and scarcely know what I would not do to prevent your being angry with me."

"No, truly," said Arnald; "Angry, I can never be with you. Let us henceforth be *mine* and *thine* in brotherhood."*

Hauteroche in delight embraced him, and bade his esquire bring a draught of generous wine; Arnald's silver helm was filled with it, and now amidst various talk they drank to their new-made brotherhood.

"Sing us something to this lovely night, my Arnald," exclaimed Guy; and

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* "*Auf du und du*," in the German. This phrase, as it arises from a peculiar custom, is scarcely to be translated: the familiarity of a christian name comes the nearest to it.—T.

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the Minstrel, taking his lyre, touched its strings, and sang as follows :

" From yon blue realms above
The stars look down in love,
And wake the soul of song,
That slumber'd deep and long.

" 'Midst darkness, they delight
In our armour shining bright,
That back reflects their beams,
As they tremble down in streams.

" Thou, watch-fire, dark and still!
Thou, night-breeze, from the hill!
My bosom swells more high
When I feel that ye are nigh.

" A wondrous game is life!
Now we 're under in the strife ;
And now we rise again,
Never weary of the pain.

" Canst see the coming morn
In the distant vapour born ?
Oh! what fate is in the star
That burns so bright afar!

" Rolls on a golden wain
Through heaven's azure plain,
Which bears the lot of all,—
Who stands, and who shall fall.

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"But other orbs are bright
In the heavens' deep blue night;
The son of song and war
Reads fortune in each star;

"He sings in sweet accord,
He battles with the sword
For *that* which makes him strong
To battle and to song.

"He combats and he sings
While yet the life fount springs;
And last, he bravely dies
But his courage never flies.

"His star looks bright and still
On the green moss of his hill—
But, brothers, shed no tear!—
Arise! for war is here."

Guy, in deep emotion, pressed his hand, and gazed long upon the watch-fire, about which swarms of gnats were buzzing in the hot summer-night; heaps of the little insects sank down into the bright blaze, stunned and dazzled.

"How they reel! how they tumble!" said he at length, with an earnestness quite unusual to him; "Hearken, dear Arnald;

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I will tell you something that lies heavily upon my mind, and you must listen most attentively."

Arnald gave a friendly sign of assent, and Guy began thus:

"About two years since there came to our country a young Neapolitan, who was called the Marquis Rinaldo of Tagliadura, a brave, cheerful youth at that time, and we loved each other heartily, and had many a wild frolic together in the outset. But, dear God! that, with him, was soon past; he grew sadder and sadder, and I shortly found out that he had conceived an unhappy passion for the Countess Alearda. At first, indeed, it took a cheerful form enough; he showed himself the most elegant and noble of us all, as well in the dance and running at the ring, as in the chace, and fishing and excursions on the water, and in every kind of festivity he could devise. And was this to gain the love of the exalted lady?—No; such a folly had never entered into

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his sober understanding; it was with him as with the poor gnats yonder."

And again Hauteroche gazed thoughtfully upon the playing of the flames and the winged victims, until after a time, he continued thus:

"Rinaldo and I were bed-fellows. Often used I to be wakened by his loud sobs, and when at such times I questioned him, he at first would answer, that he had been troubled by a painful dream. —Alas! he did indeed labour under a painful dream by night and day,—the poor enamoured youth! and then he poured forth his sorrows into my faithful heart.—Almighty heaven! what did he not try, to do some knightly service for the beautiful Alearda! but, God knows how it happened, there was then no opportunity. At last he disappeared, none knew whither; if it did not sound too madly, I could, in truth, almost believe that he had sighed himself away like the nymph in the heathen legend,

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and now answered the melancholy songs of love, in echo from the wood and from the valley."

Arnald was deeply agitated; his tears flowed fast; and Guy gently murmured;

"Alas! Maraviglia!—but you must not be warm again,—Alas, Maraviglia, if I should ever see you weep, as once the poor Rinaldo, my heart would break asunder."

The Troubadour embraced the faithful youth with great emotion, and said, "No, thou affectionate soul; have no such fear. Much as I have been moved by the fate of your poor Rinaldo, there is no spark of his blood in my veins, and in my proper self and being I do not understand his sorrow. What is there for weeping and lamentation so long as one is held worthy to serve a noble mistress? I might as well pine away from the impossibility of seizing the glorious constellation yonder. It shines upon me,—in its glory—and is not that enough?"

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The friendly Guy was satisfied, and composed himself to sleep; but Arnald long watched and gazed on the brilliant star, which, in his pure heart, he had named Alearda.

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CHAPTER X.

At the break of day the Minstrel was awakened by his leader's greeting. "I wish,"—said the Viscount, already glittering on his horse,—"I wish, Maraviglia, you would ride out with me. We have many things to speak of by the way."

Arnald got ready with joyful speed, and they rode forth into the sweetness of the morning.

Their path lay towards the position of the Saracens; the Viscount wished to observe it more narrowly, in which he trusted that the eye and experience of the Minstrel would assist him. They passed therefore, the whole of the morning from height to height, reckless of the bolts and fire balls, which were hurled upon them from the Moorish camp, for they had been remarked from the very onset.

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The sun was almost in its meridian when a Moorish rider, clothed entirely in black, galloped over the plain at a short distance from them.

"I think it is the Moor whose white Arabian you are riding," said the Viscount, and Arnald, expecting a challenge, advanced at a gentle pace towards the stranger. The latter paused a moment, considering the two hostile figures, and then flew off with speed as if he had something more important in his mind.

"He has the appearance of a young hero," said Arnald, as he returned to his commander. "His eyes sparkled like two dark fires, and he sate so well and boldly on his horse! And yet he did not try to win his white Arabian from me—I cannot understand him."

"Perhaps it was not the same," replied the Viscount, after some consideration. "And now it occurs to me that he did not wear the polished emblems on his breast, by which the rider of the white

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horse was distinguished. So much the worse, if Tarfe has two such sable knights; for, this also,—you said it truly, my gifted Minstrel-friend, — this also, looks decidedly the warrior."

In the meantime, Arnald observed a hill, from which an important point of the enemy's encampment could be overlooked with advantage, and they hastened to ascend it; there they saw widely and clearly through the Moorish station, and the quick sight of the commander as well as of the Troubadour could distinguish every thing. The Saracens were busy in throwing up intrenchments, and on that important post more particularly. Farther on they saw them erecting strong handsome barracks for the leaders, and for Tarfe a building almost like a castle, on the highest top of which already shone a gigantic half-moon of the purest gold. Arnald and the Viscount looked sadly at each other.

"All is as I feared," said the chief at

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last;—"They will not soon depart. Fast and firm as he has built these bulwarks, will Tarfe ground his heathen sway upon our coasts.—O! Maraviglia, upon our noble, flourishing, poetic coasts! A few days only, and this Moorish camp will be a fortress, under the proteetion of which fresh troops of Saracens may land in safety, and, without venturing any thing, continue to press forward. If he is beaten, this post is a secure refuge; if he conquers, a new castle will be built in advance in a few hours; and thus he will go on and on for ever."

"My heart bleeds for that I cannot say *no*," replied Arnald.

"And so may,—so dares,—a new Moorish kingdom to arise!" exclaimed the Viscount, with hand lifted up to heaven. —"A new dragon lurking on the coasts of Christendom! Arnald, I think we two shall not live to see it, and that is a consolation, but yet a weak one. If now a

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mosque should arise on our graves,—if upon its walls our honourable arms"—

His voice pealed away in hollow murmurs like a distant thunder. He drooped his head in silence.

"At all events," said Arnald, "many a battle must be fought ere that."

"Yes,—God be praised! my brave Troubadour," replied the Viscount with animation. "Let us consider how we may best begin it."

They rode back to the christian camp revolving many daring projects, till then unheard of.

There they were met by two Provençal peasants from the villages which the Saracens had occupied in their rear. They had stolen away with wise fidelity to fight under the banners of their countrymen.

Being questioned by the Viscount, they replied; "That the enemy kept good discipline, and did not even forbid their celebrating God's worship in the true christian

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manner as before. Scarcely were provisions required of them, for the Moorish vessels were rich in stores of every kind; and what was here and there demanded, was either paid for in plain gold, or received a lavish exchange of nobler and more precious commodities.—In short, Sir,"—so the young peasant concluded,—"we could thus far be well content, if it were never to be otherwise: but foreign masters are still foreign masters, and their kindness always looks like pity and condescension. When too, they begin to snarl, and rattle, and squeak in their heathen tongue,—why, the last spark of patience goes out, and folks do as we have done, and hasten hither where brave Provençals are yet fighting for Christ and their native land."

"You have the right faith," replied the noble Bisiers, and, shaking them heartily by the hand, ordered that they should be provided with arms and horses, and hospitably entertained. He then took

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Maraviglia's arm, and led him aside to a grove of plane trees.

"Do you perceive," said he,—"how prudent Tarfe is, and how seriously he thinks on conquest? God sees my heart, and knows how every suffering of a landsman cuts to my very soul; but, to be honest Arnald, one of my hopes was founded on the idea, that the enemy by wild excesses, would stir the Provençals to a general war of the people. The Moors are wiser; and every one is not so strong-minded, as the brave youths with whom we spoke just now. What think you, Maraviglia?"

"Battle! Storm!"—replied the Minstrel glowing,—"at whatever price,—we have a choice no longer."

"But our foot are weary unto death,—and maimed, moreover, in its best bands by Lanzarossa's impetuous attack."

"With the horse, then, in the depth of night upon the camp of the enemy!"

"Over ramparts and ditches?"

"Over hills and rivers, if so it must

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be, and the need is in league with honour. Many will fall, but many also will come off; this attack may fail, but those hereafter will succeed. Here, too, the gain and loss are most unequal; the gain is complete victory,—the loss, an accident, which fidelity and courage will be able to make good."

"Spoken after my own heart!" cried the Viscount; "Such an echo gives cheerfulness to resolution."

With this, they returned to the plain, where Guy, not observing the presence of the Viscount, sprang gaily towards the Minstrel, and exclaimed; "Ah, my dear Arnald, where have you been so long? I began to be heartily alarmed for you." But even then he perceived the commander-in-chief, and with a polite excuse for having, perhaps, interrupted an important conversation, he withdrew again immediately.

"How does it happen that he addresses you, Arnald, so familiarly?" asked the

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Viscount, smiling; "He is, and ever will be, the maddest companion in the army."

"I think not so," replied Maraviglia, gravely. "There is within him a natural fund of affection, truth, and sympathy, such as I have not found in equal measure with people of higher estimation. If it were merely in the excess of his joy that he had called me Arnald, what then? moments of deep emotion have drawn even from my commander this expression; It was but last night that I myself proffered brotherhood to the friendly Guy of Hauteroche."

The Viscount looked before him somewhat confused; —"Truly," he said, "you minstrels, in pursuance of your calling, must have more open hearts than the other children of men. I have never been particularly skilled in these brotherhoods, and have, therefore, in my life, entered into very few."

"And I,—God be praised!—into many,"

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replied Arnald. " If the after life did not always answer to the moment of enthusiasm, yet never could it rob me of the moment itself. Its bloom still swelled within me, and ripened at another time into the fruit that had failed at first."

" You must in this way have found many friends, and of many kinds," said the Viscount, smiling.

" That is true; but, thank God! I am conscious that I never drove from me a single heart by weakness, cowardice, or arrogance. There are many faults which may weigh upon my life, but none of these in the remotest sense."

" I feel that you are brave and good," replied the Viscount, " although often very different from myself. Give me your true hand, and help me to order all stilly and ably for our attack at night."

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CHAPTER XI.

Slow and noiseless marched the cavalry across the plain in the rising darkness; their course was directed by the watch-fires of the enemy, but only the leaders knew its object. The evil of this was, that, to reach the point where the unfinished works promised the easiest access, they had to pass by the foot of the mountain through a narrow vale in which the army must of necessity divide. Arnald received express orders to remain with the last squadrons, for the Viscount trusted that he would most quickly and securely conduct them through the passes. He marched, therefore, in the night, now become pitch-dark, by the tramp of the advanced squadrons, and so dazzled by the blaze of the watch-fires which were already near, that he scarcely knew whether he was

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on the ridge, or in the bottom of the valley. Sometimes the first seemed probable; but persuaded that the Viscount would not choose this road, where, in the attack, they must come to an immense precipice, he distrusted his own senses, and rode on with heart beating high in hope, towards the fair but perilous hour of decision.

The outposts of the Saracens now gave the challenge—but they marched on still in silence;—it was repeated; and immediately after the advanced squadrons were heard to dash forward, and their shouts of "Vive Provence!" resounded through the night. Close before Arnald all paused; fire-balls and arrows hissed thick as hail through the ranks, and soon arose the cries of the wounded.—

"Still! still!" said Arnald to the troops behind him. "We shall quickly be above, and then we hew down the Saracens more decidedly than at first upon the strand."

But the oppressed line of battle in his

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front, stood and stood, and moved not, and with each moment the Moorish shot raged more destructively amongst the squadrons. A wrathful laugh broke over his lip, as he strained his eyes to see if there was no way here that might lead towards the enemy. Close by his side an immense abyss appeared to open.—"We are, in truth, then, fallen upon the heights," he murmured to himself,—and at the same moment he saw rush back in wild speed the helmets of Provençal horsemen, illumined by the watch-fires of the enemy: before and beside him all turned, and, flying at full speed, dragged him with them againt his inclination.

"Stop, Provençals! stop!" he cried with wrath that was almost despair;—But right and left they rode against his Arabian, and if he did not wish to be run down himself, he must follow the evil stream of flight; or indeed, it was no longer a question what he *wished*. The wild multitude, together with his startled horse, tore him along, and his voice, ever so power-

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ful to incite, was now drowned in the nightly clamour. Through the din were heard the cries of the wounded, some lying on the earth, and some dragging themselves along by the manes and the stirrup leathers and the bridles.

At last the confused mass of fugitives got to an open plain; the leaders on all sides called a halt; here and there, and soon indeed every where, the ranks began to form themselves; and in a short time the squadrons again stood in array for battle, while the greater part of the wounded were laid on litters formed of spears and conveyed to secure places behind the army.

Guy of Hauteroche with a few light horsemen went forward again through the darkness, partly to learn whether the enemy dared to venture out in their pursuit, and partly to save to the utmost, those of the wounded who still lay upon the earlier position.

Arnald was even yet ignorant of what

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had really happened. He stood, before his re-ordered squadrons, as if in a wild dream, clinging to the hope that the enemy might break out upon this open ground, and thus give an occasion to the brave Provençals of making good again their past flight in the attack of cavalry. But all remained quiet; the Viscount had not yet appeared, and fears for his safety weighed heavily on the heart of Maraviglia.

An old captain, with a strong beard on his chin and lips,—he was called Messire Misura,—now rode towards Arnald, for whom he had conceived a great affection from some events in the late battles, and said, with a friendly proffer of his hand; "It was well that the Viscount's power kept you this time from your usual post with the advance: for what would have happened? you would either have broken your neck in the fall from the precipice, or the Moors would have conveniently despatched you with their lances.

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No, for that, in truth, you are much too good."

"For God's sake!" interrupted Arnald, "tell me, brave Misura, what means that scampering as if in a host of madmen? Had we really fallen upon the steep heights, instead of marching into the valley?"

"In truth, had we," replied Misura: "When the cry was given "Vive Provence!' and all thereupon rushed forward, down we fell, one over the other into the hollow beneath, and there lay just right for the shots and thrusts of the heathens by the shimmer of their watch-fires. I was one of those whose good horses had rather slid than tumbled, so up we rattled, and laid about us fairly and merrily as you did once on the sea-shore. But of what use were we few manikins against the whole Moorish camp, that in the meantime had been roused? We were forced to think ourselves happy in clambering up the heights again;

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there our people held together as if grafted. You pressed forward from behind, and the advanced bands had the precipice plain enough before them, for they had seen us tumble. The enemy, meanwhile, shot it merrily below, and it was wisest done of those captains who made their troops leap back again to the open side. At first, indeed, it vexed me, but I listened to reason at last, and did on my part also what was no longer to be avoided!"

"It was not, then, the shots and lance-thrusts of the heathens that put our squadrons to flight," said Arnald,—"Now, God be therefore praised! but where is the Viscount?"

"My good friend," replied Misura, "he may very possibly have died the death of a hero. He was amongst the first, and, when I set upon the enemy, I could distinguish him by the blaze of the Greek fires lying beneath his fallen horse; since then I have not seen him."

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"Follow me, comrade, we will seek him;" cried Arnald, and set his helmet aright, and grasped his sword more firmly.

"Of what use would that be? the brave Guy of Hauteroche has already gone out to those parts and will assuredly do all that can be done. May we forget too that we are at the head of squadrons for which we must answer to our country still more than for the life and death of a single hero!"

"You are right," replied the Troubadour somewhat disconcerted,—and he remained in troubled thought, it is true, but with perfect self-possession.

"Noble sir," said Misura after a pause,—"this cursed inactive waiting is, in troth, no pleasanter to me than to you, but it cannot now be otherwise. Pledge me, therefore, meanwhile, from this cork-flask; it is filled with the best wine of our dear native land."

Arnald, shaken in the living spirit by manifold anxieties, for this once declined

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it, but Misura somewhat angrily muttered; "The deuce! if an honest comrade offers you a draught of wine, what is there to be hesitated about? To what end have we rode together, in so many a hot day, if we are not to drink together?"

"True, indeed," replied Arnald, and laughingly pledged him.

And as if the true-hearted pledge had in some degree reconciled the spirits of this wild night, they soon after heard the challenge of the sentries answered by the Viscount's own voice. He returned, somewhat weak still from his violent fall down the precipice; Guy had saved him, and held him firmly by the arm upon his horse. But when they approached the troops, he bade him let go his hold: by a great effort he placed himself upright on the saddle, and, as he rode up and down, talked familiarly with the captains and soldiers, putting them all in mind how the heartless enemy had not ventured a pursuit, and that they would,

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beyond doubt, cut him to pieces if he only once came out upon the plain, as before upon the sea-coast.

With this he ordered the cavalry to encamp, which took place amidst songs and the loud clangor of the trumpet. Arnald perceived with delighted wonder, how much the real spirit of a whole army lies in the energy and discretion of a great commander.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE Viscont's military foresight had provided also that the leaders of infantry should be quickly and narrowly informed of the night's adventures, so that amongst their troops there could not be any paralysing terrors from the failure, and still less any murmurings against the horse.

"If any one have erred,"—said the noble Bisiers to all with whom he conversed upon it,—"if any one have erred, it is myself, who missed the entrance to the valley, and was thus with the first brave assailants precipitated from the upper ridges of the mountain."

This true and cheerful feeling quickly spread itself through all the troops; and on the ensuing morning the Provençal army by no means showed as if it had suffered a disaster; joyousness and the con-

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fidence of victory sparkled on every brow. Arnald found great delight in the mutual cordiality of his brothers, as the horsemen walked arm in arm with the foot soldier, the one not exalting himself from his surmounted perils, the other not presuming on his having had no share in the disaster. The whole camp was animated by an anxious and almost reverential care of the wounded, together with a hearty fraternization for revenge against the Saracens.

In truth, however, from this time the war took another and less cheerful aspect. Before a new attack upon his camp could be thought of, Tarfe had turned his position into a fortress, as the Viscount had foreseen. Nothing remained but to watch with the utmost strictness every valley that could lead into the plain, and to be ready always at a moment to meet the Saracen sword in hand if he should advance.

But even the best soldiers, when they

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see no visible progress of their arms, decline at last into hopelessness and sullen indolence. Arnald himself felt the yoke of this toilsome waiting to be heavy. All the brotherly affections of his breast could not still his longing after a society more in unison with his art. For though, indeed, he at times sang animating war-songs to his companions, yet the sublime and more lovely images of his fancy,—the many old tales of wonder which he intended to paint in rhyme, and such other glorious matters,—all these could not be embodied here;—and then only did true pleasure blossom in his heart when the individual enterprizes of Moorish horsemen called the cavalry to arms. Yet even in the most cheerless hours of inaction, he was seen in earnest and inciting speech with the knights and horsemen, calming their doubts, and elevating their hopes; and though his words might appear somewhat strange and unintelligible to many, yet they helped to disperse the oppressive

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clouds: more particularly did he animate the soldiers of his own troop, who ever pressed around him in closer circle on any important tidings, or on rumours that seemed important. Often, too, did the sparks of incitement spread themselves from here through the other divisions of the army.

The Viscount Bisiers worked in a similar way in his more exalted and comprehensive sphere. Cheerfulness, confidence, and persistency, beamed upon all from his heroic features, wherever he appeared; and oftentimes he purposely brought about little skirmishes to rekindle the love of battle and victory, and dissipate the clouds of inactive expectation.

These skirmishes were oftentimes serious enough from the bitterness of either side, and in less bloody campaigns would have been called battles. We will not follow our friend through every broil of this kind; thus much only need be said,—the love and esteem of the chief towards

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him continually increased, and his compatriots, as well as those subject to his command, linked themselves to him with a happier confidence, while Guy of Hauteroche and Misura remained particularly attached to him. The latter once said to him: "This war must, some day, have its end, my brave Minstrel, and then you will separate from our ranks; but to leave you entirely is what I cannot now nor ever. If we both outlive these times, I must hereafter visit you, and see how you live amongst your books and parchments, and lyres of all sorts."

Such declarations generally brought a rich store of refreshment into Maraviglia's breast; most delightfully did he feel animated, when, at a late hour, he sank upon his turfy couch covered with hay and leaves, and his lovely constellation, Alearda, peeped out from amongst the clouds amidst the evening benediction from horns and trumpets.—"God be thanked!"—such was his prayer at

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these times,—" God be thanked that to me is allotted the exercise of this arduous knighthood, without glitter and without external enjoyment! God be thanked for it, so long as I can inspire my soldiers with faith and confidence, and so long as thou, Father in heaven, givest me strength and courage for the task. Sometimes, too, thou dost grant me the happier chivalry of the naked sword, and that in full abundance. Dear Father in heaven, praise be unto thee for all things!"

And then it was to him, as if an angel fair as the light, sealed up his weary eyes with sweetest benedictions.

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CHAPTER XIII.

It was towards the end of summer when the Saracens came forth in strong numbers from their intrenchments. Their foot was seen to close together in compact ranks, while, behind them carriages with the Greek fire ascended the most commanding heights. Their cavalry had driven back the Provençal outposts, and now stood in glittering, extended lines along the plain. Archers of both armies began on either side their light warfare, and the Viscount almost hoped for a decided battle.

The proud, youthful Tarfe was distinctly visible on the heights, in rich adornments, his turban sparkling with precious stones, and surmounted by a lofty plume of heron-feathers; he bounded gracefully and lightly on his nut-brown steed, from band to band, the two young pagan

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horsemen in the black garments being ever and immediately behind him. Arnald's quick eye could distinguish the polished emblems on the breast of the one, and he did not doubt that it would soon come to a serious argument, which was to posess the good white steed:—And that would surely have been the case, for the young Moor seemed already from a distance to recognize the horse, and shook his crooked sabre threatningly in the air, while Arnald did the same with his beautiful blade that glittered, straight as a beam of light.

But now the whole face of things was changed by the precipitation of a Moorish horseman; while Tarfe and his companions had fallen somewhat behind to better the position of those who carried the Greek fire, it occurred to this man, that by a sudden charge of cavalry he might win the glory of the day entirely himself; he hastened therefore to the standard-bearer, and gave the signal for attack;

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the horns sounded; and the Moorish squadrons glittered along the plain.

The Provençal cavalry were yet in files, the more easily to form themselves wherever the enemy's attack might call for it; and, perhaps it was upon this circumstance that the hope and hasty determination of the Saracen was founded. But the Viscount, knowing the dexterity of his knights and horsemen, resolved to develope his troops as they went on, that the glory of his Provençals might not be touched even by the appearance of a wavering. The word of command resounded, and all rushed forward in order upon the enemy. Maraviglia, from very joy, grasped his sword with both hands and raised them in hasty, earnest prayer to heaven. And again he took his accustomed position, his bosom swelling high with proud expectation, while the graceful Arabian neighed joyfully beneath his master, playing lightly with the bit, and scarcely touching earth.

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It was perhaps the unlooked-for readiness to battle, and cheerful speed of this attack, that confounded the Moors. Some too of the squadrons missed from their ranks with painful uncertainty the Prince and his two chivalrous associates. They began to startle, then to waver, and at last that followed, which every one looked for who understood the nature of a charge of cavalry;—the Moorish troops turned their backs upon the foe, and hurried away in precipitate flight to the narrow passes of the mountains; with loud cries the Provençal horsemen rushed on in their pursuit.

The Viscount, however, was soon forced to command a halt to the victorious career of his own people. Already amongst his horse whizzed the bolts of the Saracen foot who were firmly intrenched, while the murderous hissing of the Greek fire hurtled in the air. Arnald wished to follow more closely the disgraceful flight of the enemy, when on

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the sudden his noble charger sank withhis fore-feet into a morass, and it was with difficulty he contrived to drag him out to a firm standing at the side; half unconsciously a few murmurs escaped his lips, but in the very same moment a fire-ball whizzed upon the spot where he had been, and expired in the wet grass of the meadow.—"Maraviglia, that was aimed at your station!" cried the knights of his troop in wonder, and Arnald prayed inwardly to God that he would graciously forgive his idle mumuring.

Still the Viscount had hoped that the enemy would again venture out, though he had even a better motive than that for remaining; namely, that both armies might plainly see the field of battle was won from the Moors by the Provençal cavalry, who also maintained it when won.

The Saracens, however, did not return. After such an utter failure in the onset, Tarfe held it best to put off to a happier day the attack which had been intended for the present. But a dreadful report was

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abroad, that he had with his own hand cleaved the skull of the rash subaltern in the first moments of his anger.

During this expectation and doubt of what might, and what might not, happen, the Viscount, in his riding up and down came before the squadron of the Troubadour; Arnald was even then singing these words with loud voice to keep up the animation of his people:

" Oh, welcome, Sir Bolt, to me!
And a welcome, Sir Arrow, to thee!
But wherefore such pride
In your swift airy ride?
You 're but splints of the ashen tree.
When once on earth lying,
There's an end of your flying!
Lullaby! lullaby! lullaby!
But we freshly will wing you
And back again swing you,
And teach you to wend
To your Moorish friend.

" Sir Bolt, you have oft been here;
And, Sir Arrow, you 've often flown near;
But still from pure haste
All your courage would waste
On the earth and the streamlet clear.

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What! over all leaping,
In shame are you sleeping?
Lullaby! lullaby! lullaby!
Or if you smote one
'Twas but darklingly done,
As the grain that winds fling
To the bird on the wing.*"

The knights laughed; one even, whose arm had been grazed by a bolt, said merrily, "The devil of a bird has had a peck here!"—With visible satisfaction the Viscount beheld Maraviglia and his youthful troop.

At this moment a fire-ball whizzed through the air and fell a short distance from them; while it yet was spitting forth flames and bursting, a bird fluttered close by; the little thing, rising in air, sang its cheerful song, as if totally unconcerned in the matter, and away then flew into the blue atmosphere, still rejoicing and clapping its wings lustily.

* The original is proverbial, and, if literally translated, would have sounded strangely to English readers.—T.

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"That is your image," brave Troubadour, said the general. "All may hiss and hurtle around, but you are still fresh in song and spirits, and belong to another home in your unbroken cheerfulness."

Arnald could have wished these words had been literal truth, for many a sad hour of his life denied them. Yet, in the present moment,—that he felt—the friendly assertion was correct, and so there must be something in it upon the whole.

Meanwhile, the Moors, instead of breaking forth again, retreated by degrees to their intrenchments; the Viscount, therefore, led off his foot and horse, and marched slowly back to his camp, overlooking in deep thought, now his own troops, and now the position of the enemy.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Not long after the General invited all the leaders to his tent; Arnald of Maraviglia was, in particular, requested not to be absent. Upon entering he found the Viscount in full armour, richly fashioned of golden scales, and a helmet lying by him, the tall feathers of which almost rivalled his own lofty stature. He was leaning with friendly smile upon an antique sword which he was accustomed to hold most dear, and which he valued as an heir-loom from his earliest ancestors. It seemed to the Troubadour, as if before him stood a magic hero from the days of Charles Martell, the great conqueror of the Saracens.

"Ye knights and chieftains,"—began the Viscount, when all were met,—"I have to make to you an earnest and an im-

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portant prayer. You must not, however, decide in the affirmative from love to me, but whatever happens, must flow from a clear conviction, which confides freely and joyfully into my hands the weal and liberation of our country."

All gazed on him in partial wonder, and after a short silence he thus continued:

"How much longer upon our noble, far-sung coasts shall the Saracen show the glitter of his golden crescent? Upon one point I know we are all agreed,—nothing is to be done by an attack upon his position. At the same time there must be some other way, and I think that I have found it.—If you will trust me, brave brothers in arms, I will challenge the Moorish Prince to a single combat, each to be in the customary equipments of his land, and that shall decide whether Tarfe's army is to sail immediately, and himself give up all attempts upon our coast, or—"

He hesitated, and looked down thoughtfully, when Arnald, seized with an in-

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ward shudder, asked: "the *Or*, now I beseech you, general,—name to me the *Or*—"

"Maraviglia," replied the Count, "nothing great has ever been accomplished without a dreadful *Or* weighing against it in the scale."

"But then it was either accomplished by the general strength, or buried the life of a whole people in its failure."

"Not always," said the Viscount; "Think upon Rome and Alba,—upon the Horatii and Curiatii."

The Troubadour meditated in silence.

"Countrymen and comrades," began the Viscount again,—"it is not idle ambition, it is not a presumptuous confidence in my own strength, that impels me to this request; you see plainly what footing the enemy has got amongst us; how ship after ship brings him band upon band from the Moorish kingdom; how he lingers and lingers, to break upon

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us at last with superior numbers, while our aids lie yet far off in cloudy and uncertain distance. Think not, thou valiant heart, that I would set all upon a single cast: how indeed could I dare do that? There are yet many pious Provençals, capable of arms, who do not belong to this army, and who, therefore, cannot be bound either by your will or by mine. Besides, we shall only promise Tarfe, in case God should wrest the victory from my hand, to leave Provence with our troops for the present, reserving to ourselves the power of return, and renewing the battle for life and death in the cause of our native land."

"If he should agree to this;"—said Arnald thoughtfully, and paused.

"Well, my brave Maraviglia," cried the Viscount. "Will you be my messenger to Tarfe with these conditions?"

Arnald bowed his head in silent affirmation. Soon, too, all the knights and

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chief people agreed to their general's proposal, and the next morning was appointed for the challenge.

As Arnald was retiring to his tent to equip himself in the fitting arms and habiliments, he was followed by the brave Misura, who said:—"May I go with you as herald? I know how to blow a trumpet admirably, and am useful besides in many other respects."—

Arnald, joyfully assenting, grasped the mighty hand of the approved warrior.

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CHAPTER XV.

WITH the first beams of morning Arnald appeared before the Viscount, in splendid equipments, as upon that day when he entered his native land on his gold-bright steed; by his side was Misura, who begged the general's permission to join the intended embassy, and easily obtained it.

"Blockhead!" murmured Guy of Hauteroche to himself; "I might as well have thought of that."

The Viscount gazed well satisfied on his splendid messenger, but at length he said: "You wear brass spurs, Maraviglia. Were those of gold lost or broken in the attack upon the Moorish infantry?"

"No one," answered Arnald, "has yet found me worthy of the knightly blow;

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how then should I presume to wear the knightly spurs?"

"By Heavens!"—exclaimed the Viscount,—"I will not be numbered with those forgetful ones, who have so long withheld from you such a jewel. Be pleased to kneel upon your knee, Master Arnald of Maraviglia."

A light murmur of approbation was heard from the many knights about them. Full of deep but joyful emotion, Arnald did after the bidding of his general. At the same time, well acquainted with the manners of knighthood, he let his ungirded sword sink beside him on the grass.

The blade of the hero touched him, and in his ears sounded solemnly the words; "For the honour of God and chaste dames, use your arm and your knightly sword."

As the new-made knight arose, Guy of Hauteroche, who had hastily undone his own golden spurs, bent down before him

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joyfully, and exclaimed: "Others may anticipate me in all else, but no one shall take from me the honour of putting on your first golden spurs; I entreat you, my hero and Troubadour, to wear them all your life long in memorial of me." And while he finished his noble office, the brave Misura regirded the sword about Arnald's loins, saying at the same time;—"I would willingly offer you my blade, but your own has been already too well approved, for you to think of changing it."

Arnald was yet standing there in thought and silent joy, while the knights and officers pressed about him with their congratulations. His Arabian neighed cheerfully, and pranced and reared at the hand of the esquire in attendance.

"It is my first knightly essay," said Maraviglia, in ecstacy;—"Thanks, my noble general and master—thanks, my dearest Guy—thanks to ye all, gentlemen, and companions—to you my brave

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Misura, I say nothing more, than that we are companions in the very first moment."

Misura replied by a friendly nod; both vaulted into the saddle, and away they flew across the meadows, swift as wind, and Arnald's esquire after them.

They had reached the windings of a cool, shady forest, and rode more slowly by each other, when the Minstrel said; "Now, although I am neither a child nor a woman, and know full well that I am not a jot better, from the knightly dub and the golden spurs, than I was two hours ago, yet, Misura, my heart beats the more proudly for them. Yes,—I will not hide it from you,—when I asked my esquire a little while since about some trifle, a sense of pleasure thrilled through me on his answering,—'Yes, Sir knight,'—Perhaps it is childish, but yet it is so."

"And must be so," answered Misura gravely. "If even amongst the heavenly host the messengers of God are distin-

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guished into archangels, thrones, and other dignities, why may not we rejoice in terrestrial splendour? They to whom the knightly mantle becomes a fool's cap, carry the fool about in themselves,—that is, they are the thing itself, and a beggar's cloak would with them infallibly turn to a fool's cap also. But to what end have our great ancestors,—to what end have our noblest princes,—founded with their life and blood the knightly order and the many institutions of honour, if he who attains them does not feel therein a real pride and exultation?—or if, indeed, they do not purify the soul and body? Let those mock, who have not in themselves the strength to participate in exalted things; honours come from God, and therefore go deeply to the heart of honest-men who receive them in joy and humility."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Arnald, and breathed towards heaven a sigh of pleasure: "If this were known to the

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departed Sir Walter of Vergi, my noble friend and master!—Without him is lost to me a spring of joy, rich and pure beyond measure. But I think he in fact does know it."

"Certainly," replied Misura; "Beyond doubt he knows it; such an excellent morsel of happiness our dear God would not keep from his elect." Though Arnald could not help laughing at the strangeness of the expression, he yet felt with deep emotion the truth that lay concealed in it.

They now came out of the forest upon a little plain at the foot of a mountain, and saw at a short distance from them the guards of the Moorish camp. Signs were exchanged amongst the enemies' out-posts, who rushed forward from all sides, swift as arrows and with brandished lances. But Arnald held high above his head a thin olive branch which he had cut down in the shady road, while Misura, taking the silver trumpet from his back, blew long sustained notes through the field

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with powerful harmony. Hereupon the Saracens stopped and consulted with each other. Slowly and with his spear's point averted, so that the motley feathers fluttered towards the knight, came up a Moorish horseman, and conversed on the embassy with Arnald, who spoke good Arabic; then having by a sign dismissed one of the outposts to Tarfe, he requested the three Provençals to turn away from the Moorish position, that they might not remark any thing which could afterwards be used to the detriment of the Saracens. Acquainted with the cautious manners of warfare, they willingly did as he desired, and the Moor conversed familiarly with Arnald, praised his equipments, and at last said: "I know that horse well; the noble Gryba lost it in helping a wounded man out of the crowd, when our infantry was so roughly treated at the land point on the islands of d'Hieres."

"Very true," replied Arnald; "And

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if I find the noble Gryba,—so he is called, is he not?"—the Moor nodded in the affirmative—"And if I find him with Prince Tarfe, two embassies might, perhaps, be despatched in one journey."—

"You will not find him there now," said the Moor. "He has been sent off many days since, we know not whither."—

"Without doubt," answered Arnald, "to fetch hither fresh assistance from Andalusia or Granada?"

"Sir," replied the Moor, "even if I knew it so, it would not become me to give you any such information."

Arnald praised the cautious warrior, and now talked with him on Arabic songs and tales, and such other delightful subjects. It had been the custom of his early days to converse with stranger-embassies and the prisoners of war. This peaceful intercourse in the midst of battles had ever given him a peculiar delight; war assumed by it the form of a cheerful rivalry, which did not actually

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divide the candidates, and though the ground of strife lay much deeper with these heathens than in other wars, yet still they were men, and, wherever it could be, Arnald loved to recollect it. At the same time many a troubled image would rise to him upon such coincidences:—"If now," he thought, "we should meet hostilely to-morrow, or the morning following, and one should after a brave struggle cut down the other, and then recognize him to be the same with whom he spoke so kindly but the day before,—Oh! then, into the saddened heart, looks the heaven of love, through the earthly tumult, and not to be mistaken; war and peace, anger and love, joy and melancholy, all are fresh and perfect one; and for the whole life the moment remains an earnest recollection."

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE Moor who had been sent to Tarfe, now returned with the Prince's order that the messengers should be brought before him. Upon this the knights of the guard, in compliance with the war-customs already mentioned, threw a thick veil over the head of the Provençals, and led them thus covered, to the quarters of the Prince upon the higher ground.

In this blind progress Arnald and Misura heard now on the right and now on the left, the sound of mirth and the clatter of goblets. It was as if the Saracen's whole host lived in revelry; but it occurred to the wary knights that this excessive noise was made purposely for their hearing, to fill them with great ideas of the Moor's good cheer and love of battle;

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for this reason, therefore, they did not pay much attention to the tumult.

Their horses were now checked, the bandage loosened from their eyes, and they stopped before Tarfe's dwelling; around it were strong fortifications of earth and trees; immediately before them arose a wooden palace, light but lofty, and of various colours, with many strange windings, the walls of which were painted partly with flowers, and partly with the forms of animals; the golden crescent of monstrous magnitude glittered from the roof almost painfully upon Arnald's eyes. Misura gazed with burning brow on Mahomet's heathen symbol, and muttered to himself,—"Were I here otherwise than as herald, thou thing there hadst stood thy time, though I broke my neck for it."

In the meanwhile the doors of an inner hall were opened. Upon cushions, covered with gold-flowered purple carpets, lay the Prince Tarfe, carelessly reclined,

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and clad in snow-white muslin, with a turban of the same about his head; many knights in various fashions stood around his couch; his broad sabre, glittering with precious stones, and his round, green, gold-enamelled shield were hung above him. In his left hand he held a lyre of uncommon form, on which he struck a few single chords, but as Arnald and Misura dismounted from their horses and came towards him, he gave away the instrument, and half raised himself with friendly salutation: At the same time in tolerably correct Provençal, he requested the ambassadors to take their places on two seats which, stood ready for them, after the European fashion.

"A good messenger,"—said Arnald, bending courteously—"does not think of rest, till he has done his embassy. Besides, I well know, most renowned Prince, that I bring you tidings long and fervently desired. Our great general, the Viscount Bisiers, invites you

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to decide in single combat with him your enterprize against this lovely land, each armed with the usual weapons of his country, and in the presence of either host."

"Now Mahomet be praised!"—exclaimed the knightly Tarfe, and raised himself with a countenance of joy. But again leaning calmly back, he added,—"But, tell me, my noble Christian, does the Viscount promise, if I conquer, to make over to me this land in perpetual possession?"

"The Provençals are the slaves of no man, and the Viscount could not promise such a thing, even if it were his wish to do so." And Arnald's eyes, as he said this, sparkled with indignation. Misura's powerful right hand grasped almost convulsively the naked pole-axe, that was suspended from his loins.

"Well then," asked Tarfe, proudly smiling,—"What am I to gain by my victory? Is it to be merely a combat

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of fame against fame, or life against life? The same to me!—But then, Sir knight, you have uttered your message but imperfectly."

"By no means," replied Arnald, and bridling his own feelings, though with difficulty, he laid before him all that had been settled in the camp the day before. To this he added,—"If however, you should hesitate to stake much against less, then let me remind you, Prince, that he who aims at the conquest of a land, fights but for his own fancies, while he who stands on his defence, carries arms for all that is most holy to him on earth. Such a heaven-devoted hero may not be prodigal of generous conditions; in your game, it is all one how much you venture; or, indeed, the more the better, for so much more brilliant the tales, you will have to tell to the ladies in Seville and Cordova." Tarfe's eyes sparkled wildly, but he collected himself, and answered,—"In some measure you are right; but inform the Viscount Bisiers that I hope to

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have much to tell the dames of Seville and Cordova, even here in Provence. We'll hold a splendid feast on the fall of your commander; and all that is young and beautiful in Andalusia and Granada shall be invited hither."

"That rests with God,"—said Arnald. "Will you let me know when and where you intend to meet the Viscount?"

Tarfe was about to answer, when there entered a young knight in black garments, whom Arnald instantly recognized from their earlier meeting, when he had mistaken him for Gryba. Yet the beard which was just beginning to grow upon his lip and chin,—the earnest frankness of his brown forehead,—the still fire of his dark eye,—and above all, his firm carriage in general,—seemed, in this blooming youth, to declare a more manly age. With few words and a respectful but not profound inclination, the knight entreated permission of the Prince to remind him of something in private.

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"Speak out openly, Balta; the stranger may and shall hear it," said Tarfe, somewhat angrily.

"Very good," replied the knight with calmness; "I must then remind you that few of us are your vassals. Most followed you, as I have done, from their own free will, and for the acquisition of fame and honour to themselves, but by no means to see you gain or lose Provence in a single combat. Upon the whole, that noble messenger hath spoken truly; the invader stands not on equal ground with him who is on his defence, and may well therefore stake much against a less; but you are not the only one who wishes to conquer, and have first therefore to consult with others."

The Prince's brow glowed fearfully from under the white muslin of his turban; Balta looked him in the eye firmly yet gently, and leaned in quiet expectation on his sword, which, Arnald observed with astonishment, was not bent in the Moorish fashion, but went off straight,

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like the brand of a Christian knight, and was furnished with a corresponding handle.

The Prince and the Moorish youth remained a long time silent. At length, —and it evidently cost his proud heart a violent struggle—at length, Tarfe again smiled, and said ;—"In truth, Gryba could not have left a more fitting deputy ; you show yourself as if his twin-brother, —greedy as a wolf, where the prey is honour."

"I have no similitude with the wolf," —replied the cool Balta ;—"I do not hunger after others' property. But I trust, that honour belongs to me as well as to those about me."

"Oh you are much worse than Gryba," cried the Prince,—"I know it well, he would, at least have lost his temper with me at the same time, and used warm, hasty language ; the red of anger would have flushed over his friendly features : but you stand there calm and composed

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as one who must be altogether in the right.—Let it pass, however;—collect the voices and bring me the report."

With this he led the envoys, through the opposite side of the building, to a carpet of green turf; here the tamarinds, and olive trees, and other sweet shrubs, were dexterously bent together into a sort of lofty hall.

"Even so would they bend us Provençals to their service,"—whispered Misura to the Minstrel; while Tarfe, not understanding, or not willing to understand this speech, invited them both to sit on one of the beautiful turf-banks that stood around, and at the same time placed himself between them. He then called for refreshments, and seemed to be most friendly and contented, suppressing, with wonderful power, every trace of his recent indignation. But on this very account did Misura eye him from aside with the more distrust—almost as one would watch a tiger that

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rubs his spotted skin gently and pleasantly against the bars of his cage, and stretches out his long claws, in the momentary absence of his keeper.

Pages, richly attired, handed round sorbet and noble fruits; when they came to Misura, he said half angrily,—"Prince Tarfe, such things please not my palate; but a goblet of your sparkling wine, I would drink and willingly."

Tarfe smiled; at a sign from him the pages brought excellent wine of Xeres,—glittering in the chrystal flask,—foaming in the tall glass goblets; the Prince, too, showed that he was not too strictly devoted to Mahommed, for he drank to the envoys, and Misura was now from his very heart contented.

"When our guests have been persuaded to taste of our hospitality, we may the rather inquire into their name and rank," said Tarfe, with a friendly smile.—"Let me know, then, noble

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envoys, how ye are called in your native home."

No sooner did he hear the name of Arnald of Maraviglia, than he dexterously plucked a laurel twig from the nearest tree, and quickly twisting it into a garland, pressed it upon the Minstrel's head.

"So then!" he exclaimed laughingly, —"you were right in saying, that I should have much to tell the dames of Cordova and Seville! How will they wonder and rejoice, when they hear that Master Arnald of Maraviglia has drank and eaten at my side! I know, the women in many Christian lands love to listen to your songs, and call you their own dear Minstrel, but with us also the Provençal rhymes are understood, and fame no doubt has told you the genius of our ladies."

"I should like to answer with a song," said Maraviglia, in the glow of joy;

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"but the time is almost too earnest for it."

And again, with a smile of satisfaction, Tarfe surveyed him from head to foot. He then turned to Misura, who, upon his question, gave out his name quick and dryly, and in a tone that almost approached to rudeness.

"We know you well also," replied Tarfe, with a dark and sparkling glance; —"And our ladies too will have learnt to know you, when Gryba tells them, how many of their darlings have fallen before your heavy battle-axe. Well, indeed,—and we know it,—well indeed has Sir Arnald's falchion struck, but you, Misura, seem to have been sent forth with your sharp steel by death himself."

"Nay,"—muttered Misura in answer, —"I lay about me keenly and fairly, but am, notwithstanding, something better than an executioner with his hatchet."

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"I did not mean to hurt your feelings," said Tarfe, confusedly.

"I believe you,"—replied Misura,—"but this very thing has often angered me: because I am larger and somewhat of stouter limbs than many others, and am rather handy with my weapons, people make as if I were a sort of murderous giant, and want to frighten their children with me. But the children are wiser; they look one fully in the eye, and many of the dear little angels have sate laughing on my arm, and played even with my beard."

As he said this, his open features beamed so kindly, that Tarfe could not help pressing his hand in deep emotion. But art and reflection soon again got the upper hand with the Prince; with pleasure he saw Misura emptying at a draught the goblet before him, and even taking his own in partial intoxication. He gave the pages a sign to fill unceasingly the glass

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of the gigantic chieftain, with the hopes that he might gain something of importance from him in his drunkenness. Arnald, who saw this purpose, endeavoured to warn his companion; but in vain: Misura drank down the fiery wine, cup after cup in huge draughts, but in whatever quantities it passed his lips, not a hasty word came from them; his large blue eyes beamed around quietly and clearly as at first; even the colour of his cheeks was not heightened.

At length Balta returned; he bent before the Prince, and said with his usual cheerfulness and serenity,—"Luck to you, noble Prince; I am outvoted, and you have gained your point. It now only depends upon yourself to fix the time and place when you will meet the Viscount Bisiers on life and death, to settle the fate of this lovely land."

"And that perhaps vexes you?" said Tarfe.

"Heaven forbid!" replied Balta;—

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"I only like that all should go on in its usual order."

"Well then, my noble Arnald of Maraviglia," cried the Prince, "Greet from me your valiant leader; say to him, that to-morrow early, between eight and nine, I shall expect him on the meadow, which by the people of this country is called the Gold-down."

Arnald bowed, and went back to the horses through the open halls of the encampment; the Prince called out to his guard not to veil the returning ambassadors, as the matter did not now depend upon military skill, but on knightly courage, man against man.

It was the morn of combat, and the sun looked down clearly from the blue heaven upon the Gold-down. Arnald and Guy of Hauteroche, on the Provençal side, Balta and another Moor on the part of Tarfe, measured the ground, and divided the sun and wind, according to the good customs of battle, while from a dis-

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tance, the two noble combatants were already seen advancing with a splendid retinue. Both armies stood there, as solemn spectators, glittering in arms and full of expectation, the Saracens upon the heights, the Christian host spread out far upon the plain.

While Arnald and Balta in their occupation came close together, the looks of the Troubadour again fell in wonder on the European-formed sword of his companion; Balta, observing it, asked what there was in it to surprize him.

"That is not a Saracen sabre," replied Arnald. "Perhaps it is some spoil of victory."

"No," replied Balta, smiling; "it is not with that as with the noble horse, which your esquire holds there by the bridle, and for which you have yet to battle with my friend, Gryba. My sword was formed in Seville, the steel for it hardened at Damascus, but the form I chose myself, because it pleased me. It seems

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to me as if the crooked blade had the nearest likeness to the snake, the straight one to the beams of light."

"I see a good omen in that, my youthful knight," said Arnald.

"How so?"

"If it should ever be accomplished, I will remind you of it; but if, in my hopes and forebodings, I have deceived myself, we should not rightly understand each other."

Balta seemed as if he wished to reply, but the noble combatants now advanced on either side. The four umpires hastened to their posts, and mounted their horses, so that each occupied a corner of the square in which the battle was to be fought; in this way the place was marked out, there being no lists beyond. The retinue of either general remained at such a distance, that the troops were allowed to overlook the combat from all points.

The two heroes entered the course

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with gracious salutations. Notwithstanding a certain likeness in their lofty stature and noble bearing, yet, in respect to dress and arms, nothing could be more dissimilar. The Viscount and his snorting charger, were, as if wholly covered with plates and scales of gold; the vizor concealed in a strange form the lineaments of the hero's face; the huge shield, shaped like a heart, glittered with the arms of the race of Bisiers; the plume waved thickly and loftily in the air, almost doubling the height of the warrior: the Viscount bore no lance, well knowing that the Moors did not use such arms after the fashion of the European tourney; long, and bright, and broad, glittered the drawn sword in his gauntletted right-hand.

Tarfe, on the contrary, sate in light, close-fitting, silver armour on his slender steed, whose fawn colours shone upon the meadow, and on whom the thin bridle was scarcely perceptible. It al-

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most seemed, as if the noble beast were guided by the very will only of his rider. In his right hand he held two javelins—the shaft of ebony; the iron,—double-tongued—a splendid sabre glittered on his hip—the little vari-coloured shield, adorned with strange images, he seemed to bear rather as an ornament than as a defence.

The Prince poised one of his lances, as if asking whether the combat was to begin; the Viscount signed assent, and the light weapon whizzed through the air in an instant. It, indeed, rebounded from the forehead of the mailed charger, yet the animal was frightened and reared wildly. That seemed to be the very thing that Tarfe wished. With the swiftness of wind, he was round his adversary; and from the left side dealt such a crushing blow upon the closed helmet, that a part of the vizor gave way and rendered visible the eyes of the Viscount, that glowed with anger. Be-

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fore the latter could subdue his horse by violent spurring, the Prince with a light gallop was at the end of the lists, and said laughingly,—"My dear knight, I must above all things first see your face." —"A light tongue brings a heavy fall," exclaimed the Viscount, and thundered with such speed upon the Prince, that there was no longer room for retreating. Tarfe, however, in his pliant armour bent himself from his horse almost to the earth, and the Viscount's fearful cut whizzed harmlessly through the air. In the meantime the nimble Saracen had sprung over, sate upright again in the saddle, and poised his second lance, while his sabre hung loosely from his hand by its ribbon. The moment, however, that his adversary approached him, he turned round, and thus continually allured him on with endless mockery, until the Viscount and his charger glowed under the weight of their heavy arms. Arnald began to fear that this wearying game

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might at last wrest the victory from the heroic hand of the Christian knight—"How hard!"—sighed he to himself,—"How hard is it to look with patience on a battle, in which are involved our fate and feelings! and how shall I ever show myself to my lady with the mournful tidings,—'Your noble husband fell beneath the Saracen, and I looked on in quiet!'—"

And now flew Tarfe's lance;—well aimed, for it whizzed directly towards the broken part of the helmet against the warrior's eagle-eye; but his good sword struck the weapon in its flight, so that the fragments whirled far away over the place of battle. Tarfe had expected much from this throw, as was evident from the ungovernable wrath with which he now rushed upon his antagonist. Without farther thought of self-defence, each struck a furious blow at the other in the same instant. Arnald imagined, that Tarfe's mail must have been burst,

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and his breast split asunder, but the polished steel had turned off the edge of the stroke, and would not let it enter. On the other hand, Tarfe's sabre had cut through the junctures of the armour, where it closed upon the neck-piece, and blood began to flow down the right shoulder of the Viscount.

The Prince seemed to wish to renew the former game, but he evidently began to stagger on his horse; the fiery animal no longer obeyed him; with every moment his face became paler and paler; the Viscount rushed upon him with his lifted falchion. But Tarfe sank his sabre, and said, with a painful smile—"Hold, my brave enemy; all, without that, is over." —And the young hero fell slowly from his horse among the grass and flowers,—lovely and noble, beyond description, in the close-fitting mail, that yielded to every motion of his body. A few drops of blood trickled out upon his thin pale lips. The brave Viscount reined in his

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snorting horse, and cried out to the umpires,—" Hither, gentlemen and help, if it yet may be, to save this heroic Prince."—All swung themselves in an instant from their saddles, and would have raised him up, but Tarfe, by signs bade them forbear, and murmured in a voice, that was scarcely audible :—" Desist ! Desist ! You only cause me unnecessary pain."—

" Where is the wound ?" said Balta, who ever retained his presence of mind, and began to feel about the mail.

" There is no wound," replied the Prince—" My good armour saved me from the sharpness of the blade, but my breast is crushed together by the wrath of that terrific blow—Only, still ! —still !—have but patience for a few moments,—it will be over directly.—Balta,—see that my word of honour is fulfilled—I mean, in respect to the marching off and embarkation.—You know that my word is past for all of you,—and

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—great Prophet!—no one must dare to say, that honour sits not a warder on my grave."

He looked up imploringly to Balta, who answered, while the hot tear was in his eye—" Depend on me, and sleep in quiet."

Tarfe smiled cheerfully, and while he murmured half in jest,—" Gryba will scold perhaps—but tell him, I fought bravely,"—the large bright eyes were closed, and he breathed out the heroic spirit from his perishable body.

Stilly weeping, Balta sank down by him on the turf. When Arnald rose up to seek his leader, he was sitting close behind him on his lofty horse; from his broken vizor the features beamed so earnestly and so solemnly, that the resemblance to the family spectre at Castle Bisiers, rushed like lightning through the Minstrel's brain; he thought with awful shuddering on the nightly vision prophetic of this victory.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Moors had silently and sorrowfully embarked themselves under the command of Balta, and their sails were no longer visible on the horizon. The Provençals agreed, ere they separated for their homes, to offer a solemn thanksgiving in the holy Minster upon the lake, and afterwards hold a festival at Castle Bisiers.

With the sound of horns, and trumpets, and joyful songs, and flying banners, the successful host returned through towns and villages, and by splendid castles; from every side, garlands of flowers, and wreaths of laurel were flung upon them, and the blooming maidens met them with the strains of triumph; mothers showed the brave warriors to their infants; the sprightly boys ran by

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their side in mimic war, grey-headed eld, and venerable matrons lifted up their hands to heaven, praising the Lord of Hosts! and every crown of honour reflected its beams ten thousand fold upon the brave victorious Viscount.

Meanwhile they approached the Minster; by degrees the loud mirth of the war-songs died away in the choral chaunt of monks, and even the rejoicing of the lands through which they passed, had visibly assumed another form. They were not received, as before, with excessive and almost wild hospitality, but with silent and solemn meals, that in many respects called to mind that best and highest feast of Christianity; numbers, too, of the populace in their holyday vestments, and crowned with olive-wreaths, followed the returning host amidst pious canticles.

In Arnald's soul arose this song, which, as he sang it to a common measure, soon spread throughout the army:

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" Holy is the Lord, our God!
Holy is the Lord, our God!
The Lord, the Lord of Zebaoth.

" The Lord hath wrought with us to day
As once he wrought in Egypt's land;
And still the wonders of his hand
Shall work 'till time hath past away.

" Full many a Pharaoh, proud in might,
Hath sunk within the red-sea's wave;
And many yet shall find a grave
Within that water's dark-red night.

" Full many a harrass'd Israel
Hath seen the cloud of flame aspire;
And many yet shall see that fire,
And on the wings of triumph swell.

" God's wonders thus roll on in pow'r
Throughout the cloudy course of time;
Still brighter glow the heavens sublime!
Still nearer comes, the last, last hour.

" Take heed,—take heed, ye souls of love,
To that which God in heaven writes;
Take heed to those eternal lights
Which gently break through clouds above.

" Ye holy mysteries, heav'nly fires,
Ye call us to a joyful life,
Where, after death's brief, fitful strife,
Our way above your world aspires.

" Holy is the Lord, our God!
Holy is the Lord, our God!
The Lord, the Lord of Zebaoth."

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They halted in front of the great Minster, and dismounted in the very spot where they had before been blessed to battle. In the meantime the infantry had come up, and the victorious host went in a body through the aisles that now echoed with the solemn swellings of the organ. Before them were carried the coffins of two young knights, who had fallen gloriously in the first battle on the shore. The burial had been deferred till this day of triumph; and now in the sight of all their brother warriors, amidst the whispered melody of a requiem, breathed only by maiden voices, the young heroes were lowered down to the great, and the wise, and the good, that slept in the ennobling tomb below.

That still longing after the grave, which at times will glow through the heart of the pious minstrel, was now breathed through Arnald's breast with the gentle melody of the requiem. But,

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when Altarbol came forward, his eyes sparkling with a holy fire, and the mass began, then again Arnald arose to life and vigour. Just opposite to him, in a lofty gallery, appeared the sublime Alearda, simple and elegant in her vesture, and surrounded by her women in all their splendour; her eyes and hands were raised gracefully to heaven, and elevated with themselves every pure soul to the home of blessedness.

"Oh! gracious God!"—sighed Arnald fervently,—"Hast thou, in thy superabundant goodness, permitted me to live to such a triumph, and celebrated as I now behold it!"

The Minstrel was lost in the sense of his own unworthiness and the feeling of heavenly mercy: he could do nothing but rouse and again rouse the sacrificial flame of the heart within, and, if at times it burnt less brightly, he would look up to his mistress in his prayer,

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and then again would glow with a holy joy in the powerful excitement of his feelings.

Divine service was over; the bands both of horse and foot fell into their ranks; and Alearda had already set out for Castle Bisiers.

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CHAPTER XIX.

In the middle of the plain where the victory was celebrated, there arose a gentle eminence, overshadowed by lofty laurel trees. This hill had been carefully adorned, and furnished with turf seats that the Viscount and Alearda might thence overlook the numerous and motley multitude.

The green meadow already echoed with the sound of lutes and voices. The dance began in circle about the trees, hung round with garlands, and soldiers and peasants were collected about the well-covered tables, while many a blushing maid was compelled to the feast with gentle violence. There, beneath a shady bower, the old men with wine flasks under their arms, prepared for themselves a convenient resting place;

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knights and noble ladies walked up and down amidst the merry numbers, festally attired, and with courteous salutations.

And now on the mount appeared the noblest pair of the festival; the trumpets sounded from all sides; the dancers paused; all arose from the flasks and tables with thankfulness; no eye that did not look towards the hill with joy and gratitude; caps, hats, and garlands were flung into the air, from every quarter; a rejoicing shout of,—"Long live the victorious Viscount! Long live the beautiful Alearda!"—resounded from the verdant meads up to the sun-lit blue of heaven.

Close beneath the eminence stood Arnald, illumined by the glory of Alearda, as with gracious dignity she bowed her head to the multitude, while her lovely features beamed with the chastened glow of victory; amidst her dark locks there glittered a wreath of diamonds and dewy roses which seemed to have kept their

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bloom till that day expressly for the adornment of the lofty beauty.

"Is it not as I told you some months since?" said a voice close beside him,—"Is it not evident from what sun, next to God, emanate the sublime and the pure, that bloom to this happy land, in song, and in deed, and in glory?"

The Troubadour looking round, perceived his Altarbol.

"Yes," he exclaimed, grasping the vigorous hand of the Monk,—"Yes, my exalted friend, that is the heavenly privilege of virtuous women, that by their beauty they admonish the world of the Eternal One, and by their presence alone, are the messengers of God to man. Whatever distinguished work they do beyond is but a friendly overplus, as it still is the main point with us men, when we wish to talk of our influence upon the world."

"So, indeed, is it, my valiant friend," replied the Abbot, and leaning upon his arm, suffered himself to be led to one of

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the turf seats upon the festal meadows. There they lingered, exalting the glory of virtuous women, and had, perhaps, remained still longer, but that Altarbol, suddenly recollecting himself, exclaimed, —"I detain you from going up the hill, where the noblest of the festival are assembled."—

"I have not been called," answered Arnald somewhat shortly.

"But you belong there, as a matter of course," said Altarbol.

"It may be *so*, and it may be *not*," replied the Troubadour; "At all events, it is better that the question should be, "Why is he absent?" than — 'What does he here?'—Our christian humility itself demands that we should stay behind in such cases; but with me,—I confess it candidly—pride, rather than humility, is the cause of my forbearance. If any one forgets to invite the great grand-child of him, the mighty founder of our race, of him, the descend-

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ant of the Minstrel-king, he must have heard too little of the house of Maraviglia to justify a farther argument. I do not apply this to the Viscount, who has ever honoured me above my merits, and to day has many and better things to think of; I only mean, that he, who bears our honourable arms, must by no means understand how those act who would intrude themselves."

"Yes, yes," said Altarbol smiling, and with a gentle shake of the head,—"I see it well; a Maraviglia is still a Maraviglia. You will not, then, associate yourself to the Troubadours who live in Castle Bisiers, and stand half and half in the Viscount's service?"

"The Viscount must have great need of me first," replied Arnald. "For the present, I think of a little farm-house close by the walls of my paternal ruins; there, if it can be so, I will take up my dwelling. Castle Bisiers will not then lie too far off for me to greet upon occa-

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sion my noble general and my exalted mistress; while, on the other hand, I can reach Walter's little tower and seat myself upon his honoured grave."

"You do well, my son," replied the Monk.

In the meantime came a page, who, in the Viscount's name invited the knight of Maraviglia to celebrate the eve of the present feast-day at Castle Bisiers; all the chiefs and nobles were already on their way thither in the approaching twilight.

"I take infinite delight in this evening," said Arnald to the Prior, with a certain youthful vivacity, which had not even yet gone from him; and Altarbol answered,—"In that also you do well, my dearest son."

Upon this they separated with great affection; Maraviglia followed the page without delay.

The illuminated castle shone splendidly through the growing twilight, and the

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rising vapours of the meadows. A joyful march and the blazing links in the hands of many pages announced the direction of the party, and Arnald had soon got up with it.

And thus they entered the alleys of the garden where the Minstrel had for the first time seen his lady from a distance: upon the trees many lamps were beginning to burn like golden fruit, and their clear brightness, wandering through the leaves and branches, fell down softly upon the splendid train below.

Arnald heard the Viscount asking after him, and hastened to his leader; the chief kindly proffered his hand, and after a moment's pause introduced him to Alearda, who was hanging on his arm.

"We know each other already," replied the Countess, gently inclining her beautiful head with her usual dignity and condescension. "But often have I been reminded by the Viscount of our conversation on that earnest evening. He

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wrote much to me of your heroism and your noble delight in war, and I rejoice to be able to greet you with a name, that you had long ago deserved, Sir Arnald of Maraviglia."

"It seems to me, as if I now for the first time received knighthood in all its glory,"—said Arnald, and his voice trembled with humble transport.

The Viscount motioned him to remain by Alearda's side, and they wandered slowly through the illuminated shades.

"You wish, perhaps, my noble Minstrel," said Alearda smiling,—"You wish with the music of your strains to invoke the year, that it might strew May-green and May-blossoms upon our lovely feast. But we can not hinder the autumn from peeping out of the summer branches with his many yellow leaves, and throwing back his damp vapours from the festal meads into the halls of our castle."

"Noble lady," replied Arnald, "I can

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well believe that it may so seem to many an aged Minstrel; but I have ever loved the autumn above all the seasons of the year. Its sweet salute of parting, its gentle forewarning of the quiet wintry sleep, the splendid colours of its garments, like those of a sacred victim—all this fills me with melancholy, deep, indeed, but infinitely delightful. For a festival of peace, I know not a fitter herald than this solemn, this splendid messenger of rest."

"I should wish you to tell me that in verse," said Alearda, as befits your Minstrel genius; — and Arnald, glowing with solemn inspiration, thus began to sing, in a gentle, agitated voice:

"When war awakes his servant death,
Then rules young May on spangled wing
And bids her nightingales to sing,
And plays o'er all with balmy breath.

"When peace at last comes on like sleep,
Then Autumn rules with golden hair;—
And for us thousand tongues prepare
A peace more calm, more still, more deep.

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"Oh, then to lake, and wood, and dale,
The little songsters bid farewell;
Yet, air and leaves, and stubble tell
To nature's calm a mournful tale.

"His antique legends Time now weaves
About the hearth's broad crackling light,—
Legends in motley colours dight,
Like those we see on Autumn's leaves.

"He whispers now his mystic lore,
As Autumn whispers through the glade;
And dimly flit the forms through shade,
As vapours sail the night-heath o'er.

"Oh, Autumn! soft thy breathings flow
Upon the gold-strings of the lyre,
And wake the song of fond desire,
And loosen many a chain of woe.

"The Minstrel lives in prophet dreams;
And thou, too, Autumn! Let then fleet
Our passing souls in union sweet
Into that rest where light n'er beams.

Several knights and ladies had approached inquiringly, upon observing, that the Minstrel spoke in verse; a murmur of approbation spread itself through all, though few only could have heard Arnald's gentle tones; but he was

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now a celebrated Troubadour, and Guy of Hauteroche, whose open nature delighted in his friend, whispered about,—"Only see now with what dexterity he has got out of the affair; I heard well the injunction of the Countess—'An eulogy in verse on autumn!' But a good hand can manage the most ungrateful subject with wit and fitness."

Alearda remained for a time in silent thought; at length she said,—"You have lent words to many a dark feeling that stirred within me like a dream, and I thank you for it. I fancy now, that I better understand why the autumn has often breathed so mysteriously upon me, and for the time to come it will be so much dearer to me."

At this moment they reached the castle door: the rejoicing clangor of trumpets from the balconies, mingled with the melody of the march, and the sports, with which the procession was accompanied, out-clamoured all attempts at

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speech. Above, in the brilliant saloon, the Viscount opened the dance with the lofty Alearda, and the festival began in all imaginable splendour.

Arnald now rioted in bliss; for he scarcely lost sight of his mistress for a moment, and sometimes as she floated by him, he was blest with a friendly salutation. So, too, was he greeted, when she left the saloon at midnight, still hanging on her husband's arm; and, now the Minstrel hastened out into the meads, where his squadron had already encamped themselves in their leafy huts; on the morrow the whole army was to pass in final greeting before the victorious Viscount and his lovely Alearda.

Scarcely did the first light of morning sparkle, when the Troubadour arose and went amongst his horsemen to order and arrange their ranks. At length the trumpets sounded the call to horse. All fell joyfully into their places; then wheeled round; and, amidst the triumphant music,

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passed before the principal balcony from which the Viscount and Alearda looked down to greet the warriors. Arnald's light squadron sang in their march this song, which they had gathered from their chieftain:

"We have fought for ladies' fame,
For the chaste, unsullied dame;
For religion's holy band;
For the freedom of our land.

"Darkling hours the Lord first gave,
Wounds to many a soldier brave,
Death to many a gallant knight,
But at last broke morning's light.

"To us was a hero given
Who hath done the work of Heaven;
Tell the tale to unborn times,
In the Minstrel's holy rhymes,

"Tell the tale,—that, if again
Night should rise with cloudy train,
Warlike fire through all may blaze
Lit from him of other days.

"Now, the garland weave, chaste dames,
That the brow of valour claims;
Still the laurel freshly spreads,
Strew its garlands o'er our heads."

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CHAPTER XX.

Amongst the garlands which the ladies scattered on the soldiers as they passed, there was one, woven of laurels and autumnal flowers, that glided down Arnald's sword upon his hand; a joyful foreboding whispered to him it was from his mistress herself, and he hung it carefully over his shoulder, and rode on in silent transport, while futurity rose before his spirit in many holy and delightful images. Many a sweet, heroic legend, and many a motley tale, some of which he intended to embody, and others again to re-create in a new blossom, now seemed as if to beckon him from the golden clouds of morning. At intervals arose the dew-dark shades of memory, while the nearness of his ex-

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alted mistress threw over the present a glorifying and enchanted splendour.

The troops made a halt—all separated for their much-loved homes with brotherly salutations. On this occasion Arnald received proofs of love and friendship, not only from his own, but from many other squadrons. The honest Misura took particular note of where he was to be sought, and the Minstrel found much delight in his promises of a speedy visit.

But now, on the return back with his horsemen to the ruins of Castle Maraviglia, he began to feel sad and lonely, and the still tears gushed into his eyes.

"When the others reach their homes," thought he, "how many a long-desired greeting will fly to meet them. In every hut that sent out a champion to this holy war, there will be a festival, and it will be repeated yearly, on this and on every day that reflects the hour of some honourable atchievement. But what do

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I find? Sad recollections from the sill of my paternal castle, now ruined and passed away;—dead solitude in its vaporous halls,—or, at most, strangers who allow my place, and do not interrupt my existence,—and there an end:—Oh! that some lovely infant met me with its smiles! Some infant, born as a sweet flower from the wanderings of my life! How willingly should I then forget that no one else received me! Its smile should be a compensation for the feast that welcomes the return of happier warriors—and then, if a year hence at the moment of our battle on the shore, I could say,—'Thus and thus it happened in this very hour,'—Oh! should I not be content and proud, though none else kept this day in honour of Maraviglia?—But, take courage, Arnald! That heavenly gift which is dealt to thee so much beyond thy merits, will not depart from thee; if, too, thy mistress takes a pleasure in thy verse, and thou art blessed enough to do for her some

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knightly service, what then imports it that a sigh comes from thine heart, or a tear from thine eyes? Oh! thou thrice-happy Minstrel, presume not to quarrel with thy fortune."

And now arose to Arnald the giant-towers of Castle Maraviglia, in its sad fall covered mysteriously with ivy, and crowned with the whispering moss; even the half sunk gates were visible through the high grass; and one might plainly see into the castle-court, overshadowed by two lofty oaks that sighed and rustled in the wind.

Then came from the near linden-wood two boys about six or seven years of age, hand-in-hand, who sang this song together, as they glided carelessly across the meadows:

"The blessing of God
On your dreamless sleep!
Fresh garlands we heap
On your home's dark sod,—
Brave Lords of Maraviglia.

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" Oh! soft be your rest!
For your watch was good
While your castle stood
In it splendour drest,—
Brave Lords of Maraviglia.

" The towers dispart,
In the dust are low;
But your praises flow
From a faithful heart,—
Brave Lords of Maraviglia."

With this the children perceived the strange knight and his horsemen, and paused, half curious, half afraid, while the sweet feeling of home thrilled like a spring air through the breast of Maraviglia.

Upon inquiry he found that these were the sons of the farmer, with whom he thought to live, and he now joyfully followed them as two conducting angels. A short time brought them amidst gay discourses, to the grange, which was shaded by some noble cork-trees, and leant against a gentle hill, whence the

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castle Maraviglia looked down upon them in its solemn ruins.

Arnald's quick eye soon remarked a new building, and the children related with joy that it was prepared for the reception of a good friend, and that their father had brought down the stones for it from the old castle.

On the one hand, the thought of this demolition of his paternal halls pierced Arnald's heart with deep anguish; on the other, it seemed as if this little mansion was really built for him, the last, the impoverished scion, of the race about to be extinguished.

The frank-hearted farmer had scarcely greeted him and heard the name of Arnald, than with visible emotion he offered to the Minstrel the use of all he owned, nor would he for a time hear of any other condition, than that the noble knight should stay with him as long as suited his own convenience. But, when Arnald with some pride answered, that in this

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way he would be driven from his paternal ruins, the farmer yielded with humility: a fixed compact was made, and Arnald paid for some years in advance, that he might leave all trifling cares behind him. After a pleasant dinner with his friendly host he entered upon the little mansion built from the stones of Castle Maraviglia.

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CHAPTER XXI.

Soon every thing was comfortably arranged. The wreath was hung up opposite to Arnald's bed, so that his eye was greeted by it on his first waking; above were his proved sword, his gold shield, his polished helmet, and his knightly spurs; but his lyre hung in the middle of the garland. On account of the near autumnal weather a large table was drawn to the fire, and was soon covered with beautiful old books, partly of a divine tenor, and partly filled with legends of the heroic times. Many of these were brought to him by Altarbol from his cloister; others he had possessed long before, and had given here and there for safety at the breaking out of the war; these he now collected by means of his

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horsemen, who would not again separate from their beloved leader. Beside him also lay snow-white parchment, on which Arnald painted the works of his fancy in splendid characters, for the minstrels of that time had the art, and, it may be said, the felicity, less of writing than of painting their creations finely and beautifully on vellum; above all, the poet decorated the first letters of every stanza in gold and brilliant colours, with a pleasing consciousness of the estimation in which such copies would be held through the lapse of centuries.

They have in part decayed, and in part been lost, those dear and splendid volumes, and yet the writer of this history cannot look but with mournful discontent on his own light-traced characters of ink, intended only as a worthless medium for the press.—May this strange exclamation be forgiven to him, and the reader with undiminished interest return

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to Arnald and the minstrel-times of Provence.

Now and then the Troubadour was at Castle Bisiers, when he would read to his mistress sometimes the tales of other days, and sometimes his own minstrelsy; while Alearda was delighted by the deep import of the songs and legends, her little angel daughter, Bertha, would often find no less joy in the fair letters, and brilliant images, depicted in the text. On such occasions Arnald ever took back with him to his solitude an abundance of the best and purest feelings.

One day he found a merchant, with many beautiful arms, before the Viscount. The ladies also were present with the knights, and looked at first with some terror on the strange weapons, but yet pleased by their glitter. The attention of the fair ones was more particularly attracted by a long dagger, with golden sheath and silver handle, which was to

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be girded to the body by a fine chain of silver. Even Alearda gazed on the steel with visible delight, although that delight was in her usual way still and thoughtful; her women, on the contrary, could never make an end of their wonder, now admiring the foliage of the handle, from which a leopard's head sprang,—now the delicate ornaments of the sheath—and now the naked blade, that shone with the reflecting brightness of a mirror.

Guy of Hauteroche with his usual levity had not remarked Alearda's pleasure in the beautiful weapon, and mocked the ladies for their eulogy, protesting that it was only a weapon for women, or at best, was calculated for treacherous Moors and Heathens.

Alearda turned away to other objects, somewhat discontented, and almost, indeed, ashamed; when Arnald, moved by her manner, and really admiring the weapon in his heart, exclaimed, with considerable vivacity,—"Brave Guy, it is

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incomprehensible to me how you can despise a weapon that in its use brings the enemy to the closest quarters. If I should conceal my sword beneath a cloak and pretend to be unarmed, it would only help me to unknightly purposes; but if I should wear this beautiful weapon openly and freely at my side by its glittering chain of silver, who then could blame me for drawing it in honourable combat? On the contrary, I know of nothing more noble, than to rush forward amidst the cuts and thrusts of hostile swords, ever with deadly wounds, but still pressing this glittering steel against the breast when honour and God command it. Nay, if I even wore it concealed, and were otherwise visibly armed, on whom but on the foe would be the blame, if he approached too near, and received an unexpected death-blow? None should lay hands upon the soldier, prompt to battle, as he would upon a dog! —And the glorious combats, too, which

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the heroes of our old legends used to manage with the dagger! now wrestling with each other, the little shining messengers of death in the hand, and now darting them from a distance at the heart and head with murderous aim, and eye that never failed. Then is the time for the dexterous bend, or the swift defence with the mantle and the shield, and all fair and open. Believe me, dear brother, every weapon, with all its brilliance, is a fearful gift of Heaven,—the lightning of God in a feeble human hand, and with each one we may work wrong, and do service to the evil spirits. It is therefore that we knights look for the signs that are imparted to us by chaste dames, the visible angels of the Lord; then the sword, and the dagger, and the spear, and the arrow, and the battle-axe, are consecrated to good,—above all, with those who are blest enough to receive their first weapons from the hands of woman."

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Guy had listened to this very kindly, and now began after his usual manner to praise the Troubadour, who could always find something elegant for the ladies, and was ever ready with the right phrase, so that Arnald, weary of this endless misunderstanding, felt the fiery spirit of his race swell high within him, and turned away from the well-meaning youth in discontent.

But scarcely did his eye meet Alearda, than all was forgotten in her charms and immediate action. She appeared not to have attended to Guy of Hauteroche,—as that, indeed, frequently happened—and gazed a moment in deep thought upon the dagger. Then, untwisting from her girdle a silk net filled with gold, and laying the purse together with its rich clasps in the hand of the merchant, who bowed profoundly, she took the dagger, returned the glittering blade into its sheath, and drew near the Troubadour. Through his soul quivered the thrill of

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joy and hope, while at the same time he chid himself for the indulgence of too rash an expectation.

But Alearda, with friendly inclining, said,—"It seems you have not received your first weapons from the hands of woman, however holily your noble soul may have longed for such a gift. Accept, then, from woman's hand at least this dagger, which you have known how to defend so ably."

And she girded him with the shining weapon.

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CHAPTER XXII.

LET none ask how the Minstrel felt at this sublime inauguration: he, to whom it might be spoken, already feels the inspiration in his knightly soul, without the story.

Arnald thanked his mistress on his knees, and, without paying much attention afterwards to what passed in the brilliant assembly, he left Castle Bisiers, just before the time of twilight, for his own still dwelling. The beautiful weapon, clashing against the delicate silver hanger, filled him incessantly with the most inspiring recollections.

The country around was still beneath the gold and rolling clouds of evening, and Arnald straying along the inclosures of the castle garden, that to him was so

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important, began to think what name this happy day bore in the calender. It occurred to him that this very day was the commencement of the autumn. And now in fancy he perceived that his beloved season was thus favouring him from gratitude for his late praises of it to Alearda. Pleased that he carried his lyre with him, he tuned its strings, and, seating himself close by the trees of the garden-belt, he sang this song:

" O'er the stubble vapours wreathing,
O'er the red leaf coldly breathing,
Come, O Autumn! Come to me!
Though thy whispers tell of dying,
Yet beneath thy flowers' sighing
Is the hope of worlds to be.

" Life's best gift I owe, sweet season,
To thy tongue's prophetic reason,
To the leaf-fall from thy bow'r;
Music's song, and Fancy's story,
All youth dreams, I lay before thee,
As the vassal of thy pow'r.

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"Sweetly lull'd in holy pleasure,
Once a Minstrel sang this measure
By the monarch's bow'r of rest;
When a fruit of golden brightness
Wav'd down with a blossom's lightness,
Dreamlike, on the Minstrel's breast."

Arnald still suffered the strings of the harp to vibrate, when a well-known voice behind him, said, "I wish you joy of your new present."—On turning round he saw Guy of Hauteroche, who now entered from a side-gate of the garden, — as it seemed, to find his horse, that even then neighed from the valley at the hand of the approaching squire.

This meeting troubled the Minstrel, for he never could get rid of Guy. He rose up in some confusion, and would have begun to talk of indifferent matters in the usual way, when his friend said with great simplicity,—"Now, where is the golden fruit?"

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Arnald looked at him with astonishment.

"The golden fruit, about which you were singing," continued Guy. "I believe, in plain truth, that such a fruit has glided down upon you from the trees."

"You have not understood me," said Arnald, smiling.

"Yes, indeed," said Guy, and as a proof repeated the last words of the song:

> "When a fruit of golden brightness
> Wav'd down with a blossom's lightness,
> Dreamlike, on the Minstrel's breast."

—"Or was all this about the golden fruit no more than a poetic fancy?"

"As *you* understand it,"—replied Arnald,—"it was indeed, dear Guy, no more than what you are pleased to call a poetic fancy."

The friendly Guy laughed, swang himself upon the horse that was just then brought to him, and said, "You may be

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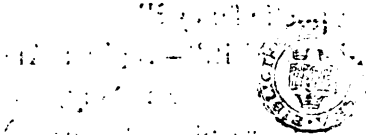
a happy people, you minstrels, but your songs are too much in the air, and you must not take it ill, if I laugh at you a little."

Arnald answered with the same frank good-humour,—"You may be a happy people, you non-minstrels, but your joys are too much in the earth, and you must not take it ill, if I laugh at you a little."

And with this they separated, heartily laughing, and in perfect peace.



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CHAPTER XXIII.

THENCEFORTH the dagger hung within the wreath, and formed a cross with the lyre; a few withering flowers fell down at times from the garland, but the laurel leaves still maintained the freshness of their green.

Just so fresh and green was the life of our friend during this autumn, which, as usual, gave life and spirits to its darling. The clouds spread their many transient images over the woods, and the meads, and the lakes, while at times the warming sun shot through them in all its glory, and brought back to fancy the heavenly visions in the works of inspired painters. The thin mists rose, too, from the grass, and veiled heaven and earth together as if in melancholy love, and the giant trees of

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the forest looked out mysteriously from their lofty tops.

For Arnald these were the days and evenings of poetic inspiration, and of that deep joy, which is seated in the soul itself. At other periods he had not produced so much of the beautiful and sublime, perhaps, even in months, as he now did in these few weeks. The happy Minstrel could not only impart his finished works to his lofty mistress, but he could speak to her of his projects, and give up to her clear sight the guidance of his future efforts. Still he seldom went to Castle Bisiers, and oft-times argued with himself, whether he was at the moment worthy or unworthy of such a travel.

When at home, he was particularly fond of visiting a gentle eminence, that was circled about with lovely lindens. From thence was a prospect through a long alley of trees, down into a shrubby vale, as if into the green and peaceful home of death. If one stood below, the

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light summit of the mount seemed to invite one upwards like a splendid hall. In Arnald's mind the place awakened many reflections on heaven and the grave, on death and eternal purity; Altarbol had already promised him to provide for his being one day buried there, and that the place should be consecrated with christian ceremonials. Both felt,—notwithstanding their difference of years,—as if the Prior would most assuredly outlive Arnald, and all their arrangements were made under this impression. Nor, upon the whole, is it to be wondered at, if the quiet heart of a monk, touched only by the light and holy breathing of the spirit, should throb much longer than the life in a minstrel's breast, which however pure, and for the most part even gentle, was yet in constant and burning agitation.

Often would Arnald sit by the dear grave of Walter, amidst the falling ruins of his castle: then arose to memory the promises of his childhood, and sometimes

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even it seemed as if he heard in the whispers of the high grass, which now covered the holy place, the voice of the old man in soft and friendly greeting, and then his eye would overflow with gentle tears. But these were not tears of sorrow,—rather tears of sweet and holy melancholy, for in the splendour of *minstrel-love*, excited by the divine beauty of Alcarda, the world of life and the world beyond the grave were changed into one and the same brilliancy.

As soon as the stars of evening had risen in the vapoury heavens, or the moon, bright as gold, twired through the bushes, or even when a few dark clouds hurried across its pale sickle, Arnald knew no dearer spot than the ruins of Castle Maraviglia. There he would wander through the halls and chambers, now always standing open, and seat himself in a nook of the empty windows, thinking how, in that place perhaps had rested one of the antient Maraviglias,

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his loving and beloved wife opposite to him.—Then again he would ascend the rampart wall, and the tower, where yet the mouldering steps of wood and the crumbling stairs allowed a passage. Thus he was soon at home here as in a familiar dwelling, which in part might be owing to that mysterious feeling which oft-times knits us in strange affinity to places to which we belong rather by our ancestors than by ourselves.

Here, too, he was destined to meet something that seemed to work an entire change in all his thoughts and actions.

It was late one evening in the uncertain moonlight that he visited his well-known bay-window, when he found his place already occupied by a figure bent together, and in deep shade, of which the white beard alone was visible. Doubtful whether this might not merely be some illusion of the nightly shadows, or some strange wild beast that had escaped from his confinement and wished to make

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his lair here, Arnald advanced silently; in his hand was the drawn dagger, without which he never left his dwelling.

The wonderful apparition inclined itself slowly,—slowly,—slowly—so that it almost touched the stones and the grass with its head: then it murmured in subdued tones, and listened,—and still listened with increased attention; at length it lifted up its head again with these words: "Must go elsewhere;—nothing to be heard here! Nothing to be seen here!"

"Are you disturbing the rest of the heroes of Maraviglia?"—cried Arnald, advancing quickly and closely before the stranger—and an echo sounded faintly through the deserted halls, "*Maraviglia!*"—Arnald shuddered at the sound.

But the stranger answered quietly: "No; I disturb no one, nor should you disturb me."—And with this he arose and would have gone his way, but Arnald crossed his path and said: "Not so;

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here I have right to ask. You see before you the last Maraviglia of his race."

"I know it."

"Well then, I must know what you have to do in these ruins, where my fathers lived, and where many a one lies buried."

"Follow me, and you shall know it."

With this he drew out a small lanthorn from beneath his wide garments, which veiled it; while he trimmed the light, its shimmer fell directly on his face and showed to the astonished Arnald the features of a venerable old man, sharp and powerful in their outlines, but yet not destitute of sweetness. A dewy cloud seemed to hang over his great dark eyes, but so that the earnest looks flamed through, like stars. Arnald followed him without hesitation, and in silence.

They went through the remotest halls, and at length up a little flight of stairs, which Arnald had never perceived, not-

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withstanding his intimate acquaintance with the ruins; it led into some strangely painted subterraneous chambers.

Here, from the lower wall looked down the images of knights and the forms of women, amongst which also were strange symbols, to which the old man, pointing, said: "Such things are painted by the Arabians, some of whom were here with Arnold of Brescia, and even, indeed, at a much earlier period; when people are in our path it is needful to take good heed to these labyrinths of trees, and horrid forms of animals."

"In *our* path!" exclaimed Arnald, indignantly;—and it seemed as if every thing within the narrow vault were crushed together at the word. "In our path! and who, then, tells thee, thou strange wanderer of the night, that thy paths are also mine?"

"St!—Still!" signed the stranger, without any other reply, and he held out a little rod of black polished wood,

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first carefully towards the walls, and then towards the earth. At the latter movement, something rolled and rustled beneath the flag-stones, and the old man smiled with great satisfaction.

"Man!" cried Arnald, and seized his arm;—"Bethink thee of what I said before! Are you presuming to disquiet the ashes of my forefathers?"

"No, indeed," replied the old man calmly: "It is only the mountain-stream which, flowing from the South-West, rolls deep below us to its level, and the gush of which has become audible from the operation of my rod. It serves me, however, for a good messenger, and much that is lovely must be near at hand. But still!—Quite still!"

And again listening, and carrying his wonderful rod lightly, but carefully, in both hands, the mysterious old man went onwards.

Suddenly the magic rod started from his fingers with so much violence, that

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he sank back in terror and aged weakness; it struck against a part of the wall, where a crowned and bearded figure was painted in vivid colours, and even the walled image seemed to shake, while within, behind the old-stones, peeled a mighty sound, half like the clang of a harp, and half like the roar of thunder, which again died off, far, far away, in the depths without a limit.

"I have found much more than I sought for," sighed the old man heavily.

And paler, and still paler was his face, till at length he slowly sunk down, as if dead, upon the earth.

Fortunately, the light in the lantern was not extinguished. Arnald forced it from the stranger's right hand, that was closed convulsively, and raised him with difficulty upon his back, that he might carry him into the fresh air, not without wonder at the unusual weight of the haggard body. A shudder ran through him, as the head of the old

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man continued to nod over his shoulder, and the long white beard flowed down upon his breast.—" If,"—thought Arnald,—" he should thus begin to move, and mutter fearful words of magic in my ear, and write too mystic symbols on my neck!"—But the old man remained stiff and silent as a corpse.

Arnald had begun his retreat in the full certainty of soon again finding the little flight of stairs, but he had evidently mistaken his path; with every effort, he got into more intricate and more narrow chambers, that sometimes led him back to the spot where the old man had swooned, but only to allure him thence into still stranger labyrinths. As often as he returned to the image of the crown-bearer, it seemed, in the deceitful light of the lantern, to move, half in menace, half in admonition, till at last Arnald scarcely dared to look at it. And now the weight grew so heavy, that he became breathless and let the

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body fall. At the same time he placed himself beside it, grasped the lantern firmly in his hand, and full of unutterable horror, veiled both head and eyes most closely in his mantle.

High above him, from a far distance, he heard a tinkling of bells, like that which used to call the monks of St. Anne's cloister to their midnight Hours. His utter, and perhaps irretrievable, separation from every thing of life pressed with melancholy weight upon his heart.

He now heard a groan of pain, and thought it came from the crown-bearer. But he cast the mantle quickly from his head, determined, let what would come, to look it firmly and fairly in the face.

But the groan did not proceed from the wonderful royal image—rather from the numbed old man, who again began to move, and urged the knight by hasty signs to lead him from the darkness of the vault. Arnald readily set out, holding the stranger carefully by the arm,

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and contrary to all expectation, he found the mossed stone steps, and after a few paces stood with his companion in the free cool air of night, high above the ruins.

The old man looked timidly about him, and at last gently murmured, "You may thank God that I did not die below there. Without me you would never have found the outlet, and must have perished wretchedly in the many passages. But now, I pray you, let us make haste to leave the ruins. I still need your arm; yonder, westward, is my dwelling, in the fisherman's hut upon the lake!"—Arnald shuddered, but carefully accompanied the mysterious old man to the place he had pointed out.

And now again he spoke as they entered upon a friendly grove, illumined by the moon, that was breaking through the clouds:

"Listen, Sir Arnald, and take good

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heed unto my words. Thy fathers could not touch the harp so sweetly as thyself, nor form such lovely verse,—"

"You must know little of my fathers," interrupted Arnald. "The great Minstrel-King was a Troubadour, whose equal will not be lightly found, either before or since his time."

"Yes, HE!"—murmured the old man, who was visibly agitated, and remained awhile silent. Then again he began, almost in whispers:

"But he knew the value of learned men much better than you do. It was his image you found in the vaults below."

"And you have after all then disturbed his rest," cried Arnald indignantly.—"*His* rest! The dearest of my ancestors!—Look to yourself!"

"No, I tell you; No!"—replied the stranger, in low and hurried whispers. "Do not speak to me about it. Above all, be still to-day, my Minstrel-Knight,—

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To-day I am weary unto death, and yonder on the shore peeps out the roof of my hospitable hut. Ah, you cannot conceive how much I am in need of rest! But if you wish to know more, then come hither to-morrow, about the mid-day hour, and inquire after Master Ultramonte. I say to you, you will do well if you come: it will be a weal to both of us."

With this he signed away his companion, and hastened with frost-shaken limbs towards his cottage. Arnald went home in deep and doubtful meditation.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

He did not long remain in doubt; the Minstrel-King, Arnold of Brescia, and many other dear names, less known than imagined, passed like fiery sparkles through the heart of the Troubadour, and his early aspiration after the world of spirits fanned the growing flame as with unseen wings. At mid-day he stood before the appointed cottage.

Master Ultramonte came out. The horror of the preceeding night seemed to have departed from him, and Arnald could scarcely understand how that face of deep thought, but of calm and friendly dignity, could ever have appeared to him unhallowed. In the old man's speech, too, there was no longer any trace of anxious and whispered hurry. With gentle cheerful words he invited

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the knight to accompany him in a walk through the mountain-forest, and supported himself familiarly upon his arm.

As they now got deeper into the wood, the delightful intimacy in which Master Ultramonte lived with all nature, opened itself more and more. He held a conversation with the trees, and the stones, and the springs, not in a mysterious manner, confounding to the senses, but so that the spirit of life and reality was therein clearly visible. Arnald had intended to question him narrowly about many things, but he was ashamed, as well as loth to fling any opposing stone in the chrystal current of these thoughts and feelings, and therefore continued silent.

"What is to come,"—he thought to himself,—"will come at all events."—And it did come.

The mystery of numbers shone in many earnest expressions in the glowing dis-

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course of Ultramonte. He unveiled secrets, which, apparently strange, and often contested, yet move in the inward soul of man; he clung, as to a golden sprout, to that power over nature, which is ever innate to humanity.

"Thy great grandfather,"—he exclaimed at length, with the glow of inspiration,—"Thy great grandfather, the Minstrel-King, knew this, and in thee lies the same power. Whether you, like him, will veil and hide it, or whether you will come forward in a glorious supremacy over your erring cotemporaries,—that rests entirely with yourself. But you ought to know it, and must learn it, for you only can loosen the ban that hangs over these splendid mysteries. Yesterday it struck the rod from my hand and almost confounded my spirit. I sought only the wonderful union of the mountain rivers with the wood-streams, and at the same time to list the singing,

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which often sounds, uncalled for, from the graves of antient heroes in the freedom of the still night of death, and which tells the great deeds of the times gone by. But it happened otherwise; my rod flew towards the spot where Crescenzio, the friend of Arnold of Brescia, had with the help of a Moorish sage, walled up a book which contains the most profound mysteries of the visible and invisible world. The heroic form of the Minstrel-King has been painted upon the wall by the skillful hand of Crescenzio to mark and to repel: his comrade inscribed below in brilliant colours nothing but trees and imperfect forms of animals, being like all Saracens, prevented by a law of Mahomet from painting human images, or any perfect shapes of beasts,—You see, I know all intimately,—But the treasure of hidden wisdom, I cannot move. A Maraviglia only can do that, and thou art the last of the Maraviglias. Bethink thee, shall the volume of Crescenzio moulder?"

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"I think not,"—said Arnald, after some reflection,—"shall we go thither again this night?"

"This night!" replied Ultramonte, smiling; "Do you then already know where the secret springs are gushing? Can you say to the lightning: '*Here strike, and there pass over?*'—Can you move the hidden graves of the trees and the flowers with the touch of affinity as with friendly words, to return an answer and a healing to your mighty heart?"

Arnald looked at him in wonder.

"You have yet to learn," continued Ultramonte; "But come again; with such a scholar I shall quickly, as well as highly, prosper. Wilt thou come, thou last of the Maraviglias, thou gifted son of nature?"

Arnald pledged himself, and the strange alliance was concluded.

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CHAPTER XXV.

From this time the Minstrel was frequent in his visits to the hut upon the mountain-lake, and with every day became more gloomy and more reserved. He now seldom went to his favourite linden-hill, seldom sate by the dear grave in Walter's castle: even his visits to Castle Bisiers were with every week less frequent, not indeed from any feeling of his own unworthiness, not that he thought he was doing any wrong, but because he wished to reach the highest point, before he opened his intentions to his mistress. Sometimes, too, he was disturbed by a peculiar reverence for the numbers, which out of his hours of instruction seemed more and more important. On many days of the month, and even on many hours of the day, he recognized the predomi-

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nance of opposing powers. But he knew decidedly, one might almost say distinctly, the ground of all these wonders. Ultramonte, in the meantime, was well contented with his scholar, and gate after gate in the secret treasure-chambers of nature, was opened to the diligent inquirer.

About this time it happened that Altarbol one morning unexpectedly entered the Minstrel's chamber, and the latter hastily concealed several segments and triangles, and leaves inscribed with strange characters. Altarbol seated himself in silence, and gazed for a long time on his young friend with searching looks that went through heart and soul.

"Arnald!"—at length he said,—'Have I ever seemed different to you yesterday than on the day before?—Years ago, than in the present hour?—And do you think, that many, many days hence,—supposing God has placed so distant a goal to both of us,—I shall ever seem other to you than in this very moment?"

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"No; truly not;" replied Arnald, and his eyes were wet with sudden emotion.

"Then remain in that still, pious, and secure track, in which we so well understood each other, and in which you may continue to be what God created you,—an honourable knight and a richly-gifted minstrel. Take heed,—Alas! take heed, my noble friend, of people who with this moment look friendly,—with the next, terrible—and again the day after are full of alluring sweetness."

"What change do you perceive in me?"—said Arnald, after a pause of silence.

"Nothing," replied the Monk,—"if you mean only the perception of outward appearance,—*much*, perhaps *all*, if our talk is of the inward man. Alas! Arnald, you seldom now sit upon Walter's grave, seldom go to Castle Bisiers, and this is because a stranger power is tearing at your heart, and would thence

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expand wings with which you might away over your lovely flower-garden, and fly from the sight of your friends, far over land and sea to a strange and unhallowed country. You yourself suspect the same result, and your eyes are wet with the foreboding, but you will not let the quiet feeling speak, and press on with anxious hurry still far and farther in those unknown labyrinths."

"Altarbol, if God hath given wings to my soul, I ought to use them; but to fly from my friends,—no; that shall never be. Do you think that I could ever forget you? That I could ever forget, Alearda?"

"No, dear Arnald; but you may mistake us for others, or others for us."

"I understand you not."

"No good sign."

"Let it be, dear Altarbol. I shall soon,—perhaps, very soon,—understand more than now, and then I shall assuredly understand you also."

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"That you did long ago, as a friendly child; then too, you understood the pious Sir Walter. Oh, you were once so true, so pure, your mind so beautiful!"

"Altarbol, if any one could move my heart, it is yourself. The tears will gush, but I must through."

"I would not willingly employ the power that is lent to me by the Church: But if I should deny you absolution of your sins, until you have confessed your present purposes?"

"I have no answer for an IF."

"That IF is a warning. I shall soon not be able to do otherwise."

The voice of Altarbol,—the voice that was else so vigorous,—now trembled at these words; Arnald could no longer restrain his warm and gushing tears, but he remained silent, and looked with the inward eye into the dark emotions of his breast.

"May God send one of his angels to you," sighed Altarbol,—"and not suf-

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fer the spirit of Arnold of Brescia, that again is walking forth, to destroy a second Maraviglia—a far lovelier Maraviglia, than he, whose ruined towers look so warningly from yonder mountain!"

With this, he veiled his face and departed. But Arnald forcibly suppressed his deep emotions; resolved to pursue his path into clearness, and looking on this obstacle as a trial only, he went with heavy but determined heart to the hut upon the lake.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

When Arnald approached, the inhabitants of the neighbouring fishing-huts were standing about Master Ultramonte in gratitude and wonder. A spring, till then unknown, was gushing down, pure as silver, from the broken rocks, and the men and women were consulting together, how this refreshing, and long-desired gift of heaven, should be led through the yards and houses that all might for ever be spared the laborious water-drawing from the lake.

Ultramonte had traced the course of the invisible stream, and instructed the fishermen of the huts to free it from the confining rocks. All looked upon him as a messenger from heaven, and Arnald felt every spark of doubt

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extinguished in his bosom. Inwardly rejoiced, he considered it as a blessing, that he had not been led astray from his present exertions, by the doubtful speeches of the Prior.

When all was arranged here, Ultramonte beckoned his friend to an orchard behind the house, and the lecture-hour began. It seemed as if it were to be the last, for one secret was unveiled after the other with wonderful rapidity, but yet a silent care weighed upon Arnald's breast, for he recognized the present day, and indeed the present hour, to be ill-omened, according to the system he had learnt. Ultramonte, on the contrary, seemed to have forgotten all calculations, and flew with daring speed to the object of his instructions. He had even consecrated a tree with many motions and exorcisms, and would have solemnly placed a branch of it in Arnald's hand, when they were inter-

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rupted by a loud ringing at the garden bell, and a voice asked if Sir Arnald of Maraviglia was within.

"Be still, and let the fool go again," whispered Ultramonte angrily.

But Arnald had recognized the voice of Alearda's page, and understood immediately that his mistress had sent after him. He felt on the sudden, as if the star of his pure devotion shone through all the dark enchanted clouds upon his bosom. He opened the gate, leaped upon his Arabian, which the boy had brought with him from Arnald's dwelling for the greater speed of his journey, and hurried off; the messenger followed him upon his sleek mule, while Ultramonte gloomily retired into the thickest bowers of his garden.

Upon the way, however, the joy of the Troubadour was much diminished, by his companion telling him, that there were several strange ladies at Castle Bisiers, who wished to be acquainted

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with the celebrated Minstrel, on which account it chiefly was that Alearda had invited him. Arnald was by no means insensible to glory, least of all when his garlands came from the hands of lovely women, but these visible and appointed exhibitions always grated on his feelings. No less too was he troubled by strange crowds about Alearda, just as one is disturbed by a motley frame in the contemplation of a noble picture; to this, moreover, was added his recollection of the unfavourable number of the day. His mistress, however, had commanded; it concerned, too, in general, the service of noble women, and with the swiftness of wind he urged his Arabian over fields and meadows to Castle Bisiers.

He found more and greater pleasure than he had expected. The stranger ladies not only loved his glory, but held in holy estimation the gift which had been lent to him from heaven; and,

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as Alcarda had dexterously removed from him all interruption, Arnald recited to them with inward delight whatever they wished to hear of songs and legends. There was nothing else wanting to him, than the presence of his noble general, who had rode out to the chase; but, however unwillingly Arnald missed him, he yet could not be discontented when he thought of many of his followers; with their woodman's sports. How often, indeed, had the friendly Guy of Hauteroche vexed him in the lofty moments of inspiration, and he was yet a dove, or even at times a peacock, compared to this endless heap of decorated ravens.—"In truth," said Arnald to himself, smiling,—"you do better to hunt the wild beasts than me."

Thus in the reflection of poetic images the evening had arisen, and they walked in solemn devotion and earnest intimacy amongst the lofty alleys of the castle-garden. High and purely throbbed Arnald's

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heart to tell his mistress all that he hoped and agitated, and already the presence of strangers began to press upon him; then it was that Guy of Hauteroche and his companions seemed to the Troubadour to be summoned for his peculiar benefit. They returned at this moment, announced the near approach of the Viscount, and held it their duty to entertain the stranger ladies in their usual fashion, so that the latter, either with or against their will, heard nothing more of the Minstrel; thus he could walk undisturbed through the lovely gardens, and beneath the lofty trees by the side of Alearda, and they were several paces before the motley crowd, while his darling Autumn poured upon him its smiles and breezes.

How could his heart — his faithful heart remain any longer closed?

Arnald now began a solemn discourse of the mystic treasures of wisdom in the ruins of Maraviglia,—of his call to

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raise them,—of many wonderful sympathies of tree and stream, in the veins of rock and man, of metals and of beasts,—and of the power which the gifted may obtain over all. At first his language was darkly breathed, but at last he manifested his conviction and the nearness of his hopes. He spoke also of the deep mystery of numbers and their prophetic import, now warning, now encouraging. Alearda looked down stilly and earnestly, and almost in fear,—if such an expression may be applied to that exalted woman.

"Perhaps,"—said Arnald, remarking this,—"perhaps I have done wrong to speak to you of such things before I had actually acquired and brought them beneath my power, and in truth I did not otherwise intend it. But, how could I, noble lady, conceal from you the highest object of my existence? It ever seems to me as if I owed the best to you as a tribute, and I am not always able to heed whether I produce it at the fitting time."

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For a few moments Alearda was silent, then she gently said:—"You know, Sir Knight, how these fearful images, that unknown world of spirits, ever near and yet infinitely distant, attract me in your minstrelsy as if by a peculiar magic; and yet—I cannot and must not conceal it from you,—now that all this is actually entering into your life, I am alarmed, and would like to say to you—Halt, Maraviglia, and return."

"Say it only, and it shall be so," answered Arnald, with some astonishment,—perhaps even with anxiety,—but yet as much devoted as ever to his lofty image, in the humbleness of devotion.

"Not so," replied Alearda; "it is not for me to bridle your daring course. That which you do with God, you must do well."

"Besides," said Arnald,—"is not my poetic world, my life;—and my life, my poetic world;—just as from day and night, from dreams and waking, when

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melted into one, first blooms the whole of human being?—and that which pleased you on one side, would you like to blame or even shun it on the other?"

"That is not precisely as I meant it," replied Alearda. "Some chosen few may perhaps walk well and safely in the path that you are treading: nay, I should even hear of it with pleasure, if any one beside yourself had brought the news,—any one who was pious, and pure, and high-minded as yourself, but not so thoroughly imbued with the fires of poesy. Arnald, it seems to me as if your delicate and lofty feeling must wither before this fearful certainty of sight. When every day and every hour calls upon you with the audible tongue of prophecy—when the spirits stream forth from the tree and from the stone, and you feel them beating at your heart with intelligible language,—when even the numbers of your rhymes begin to unveil strange mysteries—can the glowing aspiring soul of poesy bear that?

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I may be too anxious, and therefore should not hinder you; but of so much I am certain; if the weal of your country or your own honour called you to the battle, I should joyfully exclaim; '*With God, brave Knight and Troubadour! upon the foe! Maintain your poetry in your life, for both are one!*'—I cannot say so here."

She was silent, and a new light arose in Arnald's heart. A grey and heavy film of magic seemed to fall away from him; it was as if Altarbol and Walter looked with friendly motions from the clouds of evening, and he said with joyful resolution; — "To-morrow I visit the lake for the last time, and renounce the old man's mastery and my pupillage."

Alcarda smiled upon him kindly, and said;—"God be praised! for so, I feel, that it is right."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

The Viscount had returned; a splendid meal shed a glory over the joys of the day; and Arnald felt himself more and more exalted and inspired by the honouring intimacy of his former leader, and confirmed by it in all good things.

They now stood on a high terrace and looked out upon the brilliant night of stars. Alcarda was stiller and stiller; her eye, itself a star, beamed toward the pure lights of heaven, and she seemed unable to turn away from them.

"What fixes your lovely sight so strongly on the firmament?" asked the Viscount. She pointed out to him a constellation, and Arnald, who stood close behind her, perceived with deep emotion that she meant the same which

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he had named Alearda since the evening when he first conversed with her.

"You must still,"—said the lady to her husband,—"you must still remember an ornament that I inherited from my ancestors. The stars of this very constellation were imaged in shining stones upon a golden girdle-clasp, and I esteemed it above all my other jewels. Now this I have lost most strangely. In that troubled time when you were fighting against the Saracens with doubtful consequence, I thought to send a messenger to you, and as you had not seen the horseman, whom alone I could employ on that occasion — he had then but newly entered into my service,— I gave him that precious jewel as a credential.

"But how did he return to me? pale! and crushed! and yet he had not reached you. His poor horse crept behind him, weary unto death, and lamed

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for ever; the jewel he had lost; and in his last hour with his dying breath he told me this strange story;

"Two Moorish knights, called Balta and Gryba, were at that time detached with a few troops in the rear of your army. Just as my messenger had reached a narrow pass,—to the left by his side a steep rock,—to the right, below him a profound abyss,—he espied one of the Saracens upon the hill, and soon afterwards the other riding below in the valley; both were in black garments, and he upon the height had many polished emblems on his breast. They called to him to halt and deliver up the valuable jewel that he carried. In truth, he had boasted of it in the hostelry, and thus it must have been betrayed to them. As he fled without making any answer, the one upon the hill flung his javelin at him; the weapon, indeed, flew by him, but the knights hurried along on their fleet coursers to seize the messenger at the outlet

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of the pass. He was now in dreadful terror, and as a few bushes hid him for a moment from his pursuers he resolved to climb down into the valley, hoping they would in the meantime spring past him. Unfortunately his horse stumbled and slipped, and he fell with a crushing fall into the precipitous abyss below. Immediately the knight in the valley was at his side, who comforted him and bound up his wounds, but earnestly demanded the jewel. In his fear and confusion he gave it up, and in the same moment the other knight, greedy after the prey, plunged down in blind speed from the mountain, and lay almost senseless by the messenger. Soon, however, he half raised himself, and, perceiving the jewel in his companion's hand, said with a painful smile; 'Luck to you, Balta; I have the fall and you have the prize; Queen Soleyma's kiss and salutation belong to you.'—'Not so, Gryba,' answered the other; 'Our mistress herself must first

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decide that. Mine is the fortune, but the daring deed is thine. Are you much hurt?'—'Oh not mortally,' replied Gryba smiling, and raised himself from the earth. 'You know I am not so easily despatched.'—With this they went off talking and singing, and I not only grieve for the jewel, but still more in the idea that it has been given to the Heathen Queen, who now perhaps is pranking it at her riotous festivals with the honourable ornament of my house."

"A crusade against Granada," murmured the Viscount thoughtfully.

"In the name of God!"—said Alearda with earnestness, and almost with severity,—"In the name of God! did then my departed mother give me this precious jewel with her dying hands that Christian soldiers might shed their blood for it? Oh! my lord, lay not such a deed upon your conscience or on mine. Besides are you not summoned by the

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King of the Franks to matters of higher import?"

The Viscount inclined his head in token of assent. But Arnald rejoiced from his inmost soul, and, when soon afterwards he took his leave of Alearda, he exclaimed;—"My noble mistress sees me again with the starry-ornament, or sees me never."

She seemed but half to have understood him, yet she smiled well pleased, and that for him was the signal for his journey.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

As Arnald took his way home in the quiet night through the lovely fields and meadows, the constellation of the wain stood glittering above him in the sky, not far from that which he named Alearda, and he again found his pure, and holy pleasure therein, as in a token made visible from heaven.

Strange thoughts passed through his mind on account of the unfavourable numbers of the present day. But he then said to himself,—"Quite right!—So it is, and so it should be. This day was unapt to my striving and struggling after mysteries that were not intended for me; for my loftier and purer being it is the very right one. With this, thou alluring magic of numbers, and whatever else there may be

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of mystic power, thou art for henceforth null and dead to me. I renounce you for ever; I renounce the mastery of my dark teacher, as surely as she, for whose love I do it, is the only mistress of my heart."

Something similar to this he said the next morning to the wondrous Ultramonte, only that he left out the name of Alearda.—"I am less surprized than vexed," replied the Master, "for even yesterday, when you rode from me so thoughtlessly, I might have known what would happen, came it early or came it late. Good however. For him, who by a fortunate grasp has taken a magic staff into his hands and foolishly thrown it from him again—for him, indeed, the mysterious agent was never fashioned. Luck to you on your way. I will to the Marquis Rinaldo of Tagliaduro."

And before Arnald could well bethink himself of this name, that sounded so familiarly, Ultramonte had entered into

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the fishing-hut, and turned the bolts from within. Now first occurred to the Minstrel what Guy had told him of the Neapolitan, but it again slipped his memory amidst more important matters. He hastened home, prepared every thing for his journey, and then went on his Arabian to St. Ann's cloister, accompanied by his esquire.

Upon asking after the Abbot, the porter showed him to the church, where Altarbol was even then in the confessional. Arnald understood the directing finger of heavenly mercy, and hastened thither. When the Prior saw him kneeling on the stool of confession, he shook his reverend head doubtfully, and said,—"Oh son, dear son of my heart, thou knowest the only condition under which I dare give thee absolution of thy sins. Art thou resolved to tell me all?"—"All!" replied the knight joyfully.—And, like a pure stream, flowed from his lips the story of his mysterious lessons, and wherefore he

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had now utterly renounced them. The tears of joy started into the eyes of Altarbol, as he said,—"Oh beneficent Creator! again hast thou shown thy salvation to a precious soul."—And with this he joyfully gave absolution to the Minstrel-Knight.

Shortly afterwards the two friends walked under the evergreen of the lofty pines in the cloister-garden, and after a long and thoughtful silence, the Prior said;

"You are now going, my dear son, into the land of the Heathens, where perhaps, there may still be some descendants of that magic-given Moor,—of that Crescenzio, who, as Ultramonte related, had buried the wondrous book of Arnold, and helped to paint the figures before it on the wall. Now tell me, do you fancy yourself strong enough against the renewed allurements that may perhaps tempt you to become, from a cheerful pious Minstrel, a magic miner in the treasures of unhallowed knowledge?"

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"With God, dear friend and father, I hope it certainly," replied Arnald. "You know, indeed, how pure a light protects me."

Altarbol answered thoughtfully in the affirmative; but after a time he began again:—"Arnald, there was once at the Viscount's court, an Italian Knight—he was called the Marquis Rinaldo of Tagliaduro."

But at the angry glow which rushed into Arnald's cheeks, the Prior paused in wonder, upon which the Minstrel burst out thus vehemently;

"Who told you, Sir Abbot, to couple my name with that of the mad Neapolitan? When once the good-natured Guy of Hauteroche did so, I suffered it to pass without anger, considering that on his dissipated sensual life the beams of my pure love could not fall with sufficient clearness, and I instructed him in all with placid gentleness. But that you, Altarbol,—you to whom half

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an hour past, my soul lay open in the holy light of confession,—you, who have been acquainted with my life and feelings since my childhood,—you, who must know how pure women are to be served, because you know the service of the holy-ones,—that you should come to me with your warnings of the sad confused passion of the Marquis Rinaldo of Tagliaduro!—Oh, Altarbol!"

The aged man looked at him with piercing eyes, and at length answered,—"I hope the spring is good and pure, from which flows this stream of anger, and therefore from my heart I welcome it. But, Arnald, many noble spirits, that never deceived others, have deceived themselves with unconscious juggling. Arnald, has no wish ever entered into your mind, that you were obliged to conceal from Alearda?"

The Troubadour long reflected, earnestly and honestly, and then said,—"No, Father; as to what concerns

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Alearda herself, I have never entertained the slightest wish that I should have blushed to acknowledge to her."

"You are no longer a youth, who loses himself in the tumult of hope," continued Altarbol. "Life lies clear and open before your manly sight. What pretentions make you to this life?"

"With the help of God, I will remain a powerful and pious Minstrel, as well as an honourable knight,"—replied Arnald. "I will struggle after the right and the prize, in arms as in song, and the bloom of all shall be dedicated to my lofty mistress; and if I am ever to be highly—most highly—blessed—oh! then, I should wish that she would say to me these words with her lovely mouth;—'I acknowledge you for my knight, Sir Arnald of Maraviglia.'—But even if that should never happen, she yet takes delight in my minstrelsy, here and there too a path is open for her service, and I am—and remain a man most fortunate."

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"Go forth with God, my friend, and continue true and joyful in the noble service you have chosen," said Altarbol cheerfully, as he laid his hand upon the knight's head, and blessed him.

Arnald bent with deep reverence, and then gently said, "I have been too hasty towards you, dearest father."

"It was because I had to do with a Maraviglia," replied the Prior, smiling.—And the friends took a loving and a hopeful farewell of each other.

For the last time now for many months, the Arabian carried his present master to the sea-shore; there Arnald left him behind in the hut of his faithful squire, and the next morning saw the white sails of the Minstrel's bark, already swelling far abroad upon the bosom of the ocean.

END OF VOL I.

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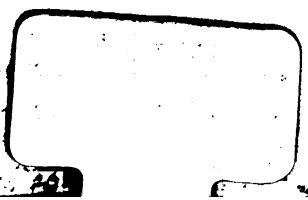

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